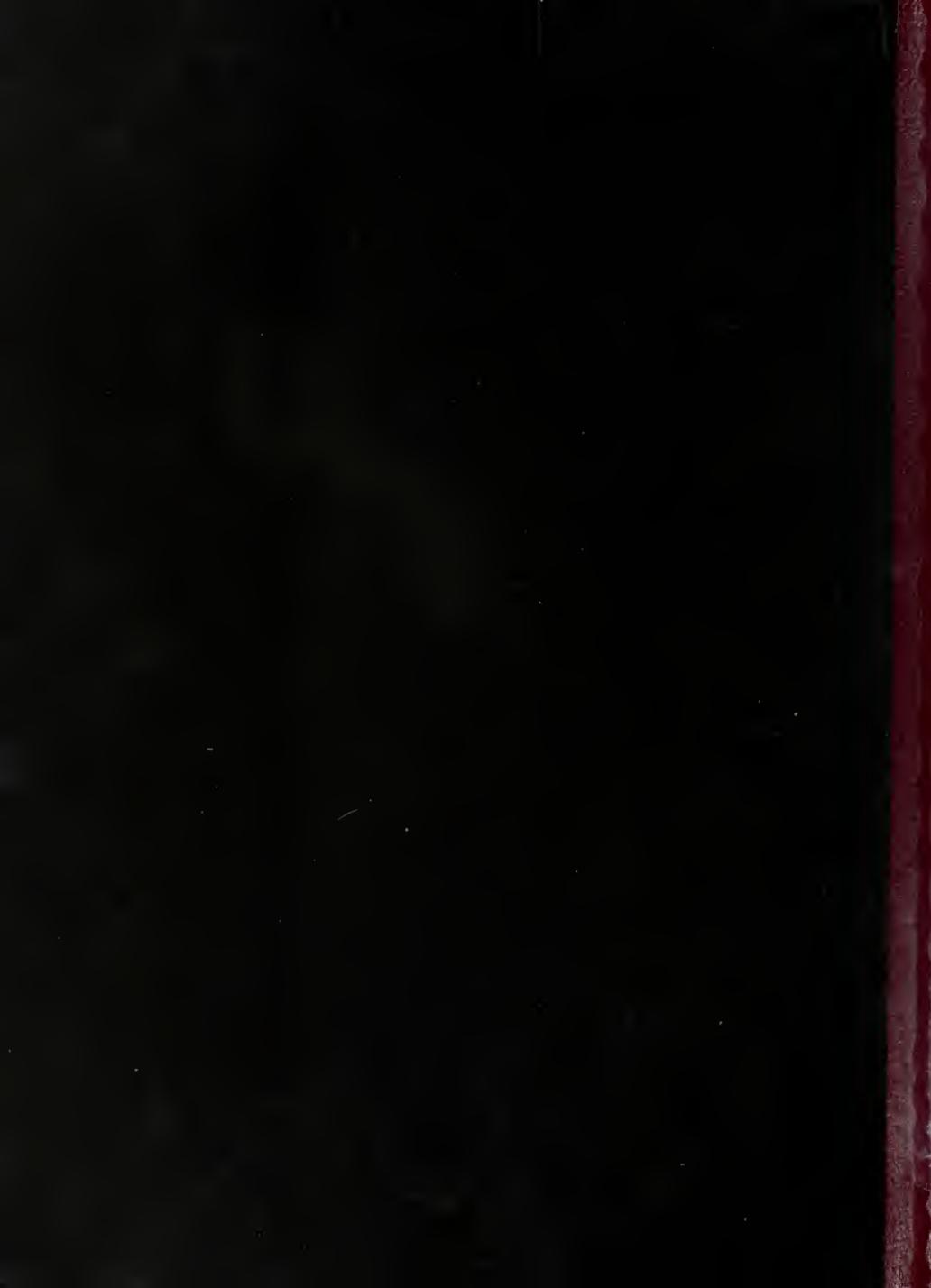


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THE LIFE STORY OF EDWARD F. SEARLES

Compiled by Ray Fremmer

FROM THE UNABRIDGED HAND-WRITTEN MANUSCRIPT OF 1948

Preserved by Andrew 'Angy' Ellison

Transcribed by Robert DeLage

Preface and Dedication
to the Abridged Version of 1957

THIS IS A STORY OF THE REALIZATION OF A BOY'S DREAM
TO LIVE IN A BIG CASTLE INSTEAD OF DAYDREAMING ABOUT ONE.

WHEN I WAS A SMALL BOY I LIVED IN A TOWN
WHERE EMPTY OLD CASTLES STIRRED MY IMAGINATION
AND I STILL REMEMBER THINKING . . .

"WHY ARE THEY HERE? HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN HERE,
AND WHY IS THERE NOBODY INSIDE?"

MYSTERY AND AWE FOR GRANDEUR FILLED MY MIND.

NOW I HAVE SOLVED THE MYSTERY,
BUT IN MY DREAMS I STILL STEALTHFULLY WALK THE CASTLES' GROUNDS
AND BRAVELY PEER INSIDE.

Dedication

TO BOYHOOD, WITH ALL ITS ENTHUSIASM AND CURIOSITY



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Edward Francis Searles

circa 1900

The Hopkins
Mansion

Nob Hill
San Francisco



The oldest section
of Pine Lodge
visible on the left
circa 1890

Before being
enveloped by
newer construction



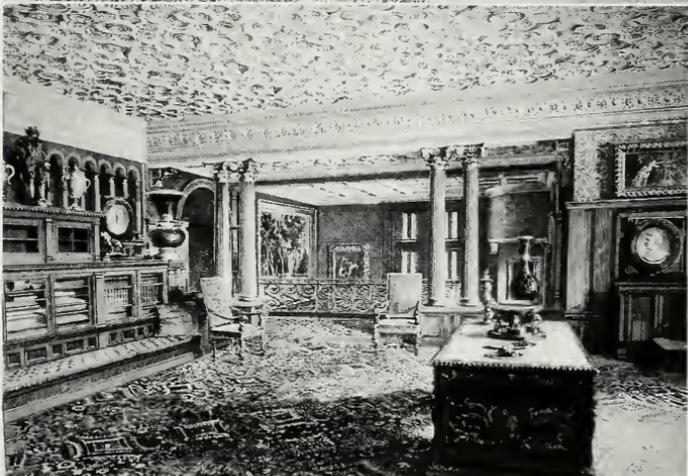
Barrington House
(Kellogg Terrace)



The Entrance Hall



The Living Hall



Pine Lodge
from old East Street
circa 1905



Gate Lodge
and Entrance
to Pine Lodge
circa 1900



Lower terraces
at Pine Lodge





Top photo: The Great Banquet Hall - Appleside wing at Pine Lodge

Bottom Photo: The adjoining Tapestry Gallery and Organ

Washington Park
and Monument
opposite Pine Lodge
circa 1900



The Red Tavern
Searles' Guest House
in Methuen



Searles High School
in Methuen
circa 1905



Stanton Harcourt
Windham

circa 1927



The Living Hall



The Dining Room



Mr. Searles and "Junior"
at Pine Lodge

June, 1918



"Junior"



Appleside
E. F. Searles'
Residence
at Pine Lodge



Stillwater Manor
Salem,
New Hampshire



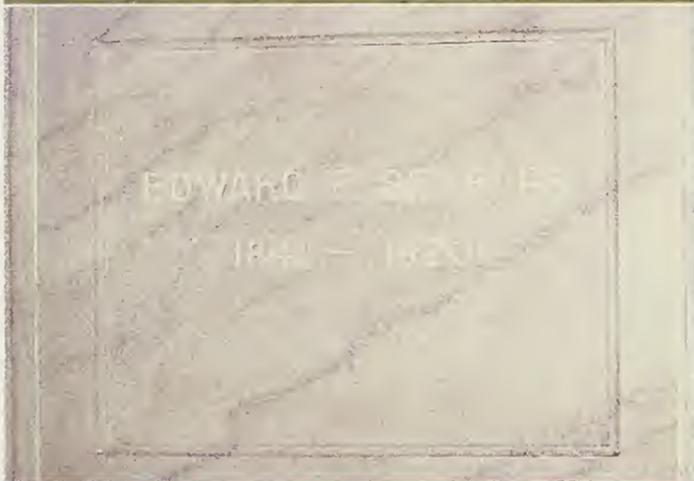
Stanton Harcourt
Windham,
New Hampshire



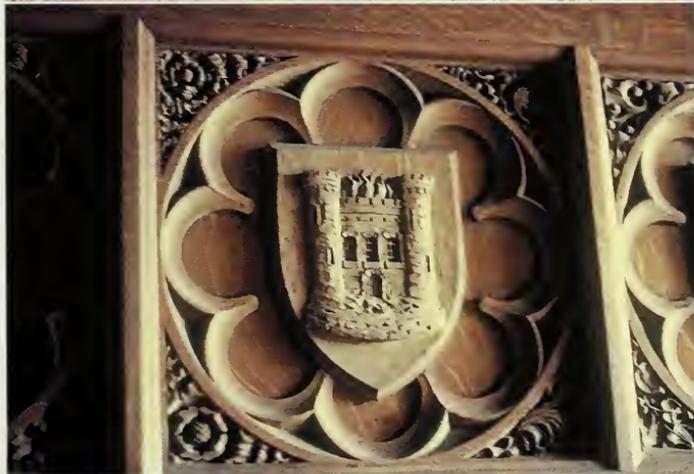
The Tower and Chapel
at Pine Lodge



Searles' Crypt
in the lower level
of the Chapel



The Searles
Burning Towers Crest



Chapter One

" AN OLD CALIFORNIA GOLD MINE "

Chapter One

" AN OLD CALIFORNIA GOLD MINE "

Edward Francis (Frank) Searles was born in a small farm house in Methuen, Massachusetts, on the Fourth of July, 1841. His parents left Nashua, New Hampshire, to come to Methuen so the father, Jessie Gould Searles, could work in the cotton mill. When Frank was three years old his father, sister, and younger brother all died within six weeks during the summer, victims of an awful epidemic. Mrs. Sarah Littlefield Searles, the mother, was forced to mortgage the house and its six acres in order to support herself, Frank, and his older brother Andy. In 1853, when Frank was twelve, he too went to work in the cotton mill. His formal education was terminated at that time. He did, however, begin to take piano lessons with a Mrs. Fells of Lawrence.

In the next few years he also worked in a shoe factory and in his uncle's department store in the neighboring city of Lawrence. All the while he was continuing with his piano lessons. After studying the organ in Boston he began to earn his living by giving piano lessons in Methuen, Lawrence, and nearby Salem, New Hampshire. About this time, a pretty Irish girl by the name of Catherine Linehan came to the Searles home to board and help Mrs. Searles with the housekeeping. Both the Searles brothers, Frank, age 19, and Andy, 21, became extremely fond of her. Then came the Civil War. Andy enlisted in the Army and Frank went to Gardiner,

Maine, to teach music in order to support his mother. While Andy was away, Frank became engaged to Catherine. However, when Andy came home after the war, in the uniform of a major, Catherine broke her engagement to Frank and married Andy.

To forget the loss of his sweetheart Frank decided to leave Methuen. With the birth of the mill city of Lawrence in 1847, on land that was formerly part of Methuen, the little farming town had changed practically overnight from one of farms to one of mills. And Frank hated the mills. He went to Boston and secured a job with Paul & Company, upholsterers and furniture dealers. For the next twelve years, until he was thirty-three, he sold furniture. Then, in 1875, Paul & Company went out of business. Frank returned to Methuen with his savings and cancelled the thirty year old mortgage on his mother's house. She then deeded it over to him. The mortgage cancellation had cost him \$1,450. He immediately remortgaged the property for \$3,500. The difference between these figures illustrates the rise in the value of real estate since the new mills doubled the population of the town. In those days \$3,500. was a lot of money. Frank Searles went to Europe for six months.

After this little adventure, it was to New York, the city of opportunity, and not Boston that Frank returned. There he found a position with Herter Brothers, interior decorators, well known for the work they were to do on the Vanderbilt mansions. He remained with Herter Brothers until 1881 when he had a long spell of inflammatory rheumatism which put him on the flat of his back

for some time. His doctor told him he should spend his time out west in order to recover. He decided to go to California to regain his health and also make a few calls at the homes of certain California millionaires who had employed Herter Brothers for interior decorating. After securing a letter of introduction from his former employer he went to San Francisco to present it to Mrs. Mark Hopkins at her palatial Nob Hill mansion. She was a fabulously wealthy widow whose husband had made a fortune pioneering one of the West's first railroads.

So it was that in April, 1883, Frank Searles boldly knocked at the front door of a gold mine and, wonder of wonders, it opened! Many years later, on recalling this day, Searles said, "I had never met her before. I saw the servant; she said Mrs. Hopkins never saw strangers except by appointment. I said I merely called to see the house."

"The next day Mr. Timothy Hopkins (Mrs. Hopkins' adopted son) called upon me, presented his card, and said that Mrs. Hopkins would like me to dine with her at a family dinner. I objected; they were all strangers to me. But Mr. Hopkins told me there was no ceremony, and I went. I met Mrs. Hopkins. She was tall, quite large, and strong, mentally and physically. I was told that if I came the next morning I might see the house.

"I was in and about San Francisco four or five weeks. I called on Mrs. Hopkins four times - once to see the house, once to dine there, once to go to Menlo Park, and once to pay my dinner call. I had no communication whatever with Mrs. Hopkins that summer. I heard from Mrs. Timothy Hopkins in October, saying that Mrs. Hopkins

Senior was coming east to look after her affairs in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and asked me if I would assist her. I answered that I would."

While assisting her in building a memorial to her husband in Great Barrington, Frank Searles received a proposal of marriage from the wealthy widow. She was sixty-three and he was forty-two; she was older and he was handsome. But money, especially her millions, gave her the courage to ask. Besides, she realized that money is a fascinating lure. At first Searles seemed hesitant. She was, after all, somewhat older than him; twenty-one years older in fact. However, Searles seemed to slowly weaken.

Chapter Two

" GREAT BARRINGTON AND MARRIAGE "

Chapter Two

" GREAT BARRINGTON AND MARRIAGE "

Late in the summer of 1884, Mrs. Hopkins decided to build the Great Barrington mansion in the Berkshire mountains of Massachusetts. Searles recalled, "She said she would build a house if I would do it for her. I said, 'Very well, I'll do it.' She asked, 'For how much?', I said, 'Ten percent.' "

The plans were prepared by architects McKim, Mead and White, of New York, and the ground was broken in April, 1885. In May Searles and a friend went to Europe to get suggestions and information about the construction and furnishing of the mansion. They returned to America two months later on the Fourth of July, Searles' forty-fourth birthday. Mrs. Hopkins wrote her adopted son, Timothy, that Searles was superintending the construction of the house without compensation. Searles knew that she had arrived at this decision but it didn't worry him. On reflecting how he felt at the time, he later said, "I knew that I would be paid in the end, somehow or other." This shows that he was, even then, giving some thought to reimbursement for his arrangement with Mrs. Hopkins.

During the next two and a half years, the building of the mansion, and the relations between the retired interior decorator and wealthy widow progressed smoothly. They travelled about the country, to Florida and elsewhere, and attended various music

recitals. In 1887 they visited Block Island, off the coast of Rhode Island, and liked it so well that they purchased some land and later built a summer home there. Searles handled all the money and paid out over \$900,000. for the building of the Great Barrington mansion.

When he needed money he sent word to California, to Timothy, who managed all his mother's business affairs. While assisting in the choosing of the interior decorations for the mansion, Searles sometimes lived there with Mrs. Hopkins for as long as six months, and other times for only a few days. Early in October of 1887 they decided to marry by mutual consent. The wedding took place in Trinity Chapel, New York, on the morning of November 8, 1887. After journeying to Methuen, they returned to New York to sail to Europe for a six month wedding trip. After returning from the wedding trip, Searles busied himself by making alterations on the little house he was born in at Methuen, and further decorating the Great Barrington place. This mansion rests on a hillside which slopes gently down to meet meadow land. It has a frontage of one hundred and eighty feet and an average depth of one hundred feet. Seven towers and numerous gables break the monotony of the massive masonry of blue dolomite quarried across the river. Of the forty rooms in the mansion, the most interesting is the library which is finished in walnut; the Windsor Room, so called, because its doors were brought from Windsor Castle. With the help of the railroad wealth the Searleses were living a pleasant life building castles on the ground rather than in the air. Until 1890 they visited Europe every season, and divided their summers between

Methuen and Great Barrington.

In the fall of 1890 Mrs. Searles began to be bothered by persisting attacks of the grippe. Before that she had hardly been ill a day, and then it was only a slight cold. As winter came on, Mrs. Morse, a Christian Scientist was summoned by Mrs. Searles and she recovered temporarily. In May of 1891 she again contracted the grippe and in July a Boston physician suggested a change of climate and the Searleses travelled west. They returned to Great Barrington shortly afterwards, however, without the change having done her any good whatsoever.

About July fourteenth the attending physician informed Searles that although his wife didn't appear to be very ill, her condition was really serious. She was a strong woman and would ordinarily have recovered from even a severe attack of the grippe but her present illness was being complicated by heart trouble, dropsy, and old age in general. As it was, it appeared that she was the victim of a persistent bad cold. One day she would be up and around; the next day she would have to remain in bed. A week after learning of the seriousness of his wife's illness, Searles went from Great Barrington to New York to procure the private railway car they owned. He hoped that by bringing his wife to Methuen in the private car she would be able to rest comfortably and the change would do her good. When he returned from New York with the car she was worse than when he left her. Three or four days later, however, in Methuen, she felt well enough to go for a short walk in the warm July air. Her strength was remarkable. Three days later, at four o'clock in the morning

of July 25th, 1891, she made the slight change from deep sleep to death. She had been married to the man who was twenty-one years her junior less than four years when she passed away and made him one of the richest men in the United States. The California gold mine finally produced pay dirt.

Chapter Three

" THE POWER AND THE KINGDOM "

Chapter Three

" THE POWER AND THE KINGDOM "

Since his boyhood Searles had had ideas about changing the physical appearance of his town. As he walked about Methuen in his youth, a poor farm boy, he daydreamed of changing things to his own liking. He would imagine how a certain tract of land would look without the houses on it that were then there. He would rearrange and replan whole districts as he would have them if by some miracle he could own them. If he liked a particular house and thought that all the others around it were drab and ordinary looking, his dream plans had all the houses torn down except the one he liked. In his more fantastic dreams he was directing the assembling of big mansions out of the various small houses that he liked. He was moving them into location so as to form wings and gables to his own liking, and tearing down everything else to make more room. In his most fantastic dreams he dreamt about the castles he would build if he had unlimited power. He dreamed he owned vast tracts of land.

When he began to earn big money as a result of the percentage basis on which he was being paid for decorating the homes of the wealthy in New York for Herter Brothers, he started to make what improvements he could afford around the homestead in Methuen. At first he realized only the most modest parts of the dreams he had dreamt as a boy. When he came into greater wealth as a result of his marriage, the greater became his desire to add wing after wing

to his little farm house. He also built the mansions he had dreamed of building out of the various houses he liked. When he came into unlimited wealth as a result of his wife's death, he began to put into reality the most fantastic of his castle building and land owning dreams. But to realize what a triumph this was for him we must begin at the beginning.

When Searles was a young man in Methuen he made a choice; rather than prepare himself for a position in the monotony of the new machine age, he reasoned that the arts were more important and went to Boston where he found a position with a furniture company. It wasn't quite as artistic a position as he would have preferred but the experience he acquired helped him later on when he applied art to practical use in interior decorating. Back in Methuen, when Searles made his choice, another youth just a year younger than he also made his choice. His name was Charles Tenney and he chose security in the monotonous yet prospering machine industries rather than beauty and art.

When Tenney was twenty-three he married Miss Fanny Gleason, daughter of a prominent Methuen hat manufacturer, and eventually succeeded him in the firm. Soon after that he and an older brother had their own hat factory and were amassing small fortunes. By 1870 Tenney was buying real estate in the better residential sections of town with the idea in mind of choosing the most appealing section of it one day to build there a permanent family home. In 1876 he began buying tracts of land very close to the Searles homestead. And in March of 1880, when he purchased a

fifteen-acre tract immediately adjoining the Searles land, it was obvious that this was the site he had chosen to form his estate.

If this incident had not occurred, no doubt Searles would not have begun to buy up land when he did but rather would have waited until he was more financially secure. As it was, he realized that Tenney had stepped in and disturbed his plans for acquiring all the land around the place where he was born. No doubt Tenney's presence on the scene was a strong incentive for Searles to try all the harder to climb fortune's ladder. He was, perhaps, envious of Charles Tenney's present cultural and financial status. Searles determined to let it be known that he too intended to enlarge his land holdings for the purpose of forming an estate. In October of 1880, the same year that Tenney acquired the fifteen-acre tract, Searles bought an acre of land adjoining the homestead, cancelled the mortgage that had been on his place since he went to Europe, and bought one other parcel of land. In 1883, after Tenney sold out his share in the hat factory to his brother and was busy in New York establishing a hat commission house, Searles managed to buy two more parcels of land. From the location of these, across the street from his own land, it is apparent that he was planning a large scale expansion. This would infer that even at that early date he had the idea in mind of buying the very streets of the town, which he later did.

Then, after the purchase of these two parcels, he suddenly stopped buying land. That same year, 1883, Mrs. Hopkins had proposed marriage to him and although he didn't accept immediately,

he was so fascinated by the idea of marrying into that much wealth that from then on, he may have needed all the income from his savings to keep in step with her during various trips to Florida and other places. By this time he had retired from Herter Brothers and was relying solely on his savings.

In March, 1886, he found it necessary, once again, to take out a mortgage on his home and land in Methuen. The seven thousand dollars that he received on the seven acre tract carried him over until November, 1887, when he married Mrs. Hopkins. In 1888, after his fortune was large enough so that he could have bought up the whole town if he had had enough real estate agents, he recommenced buying land. In that year he purchased seven parcels of land, one or more of which bordered on the Tenney property proving that Searles was finally giving him some competition. By this time, however, Charles Tenney had bought up all the most desirable land on top of the hill overlooking the Searles place, and Searles had to satisfy himself with scattered pieces near the bottom and within the town itself.

Although he later succeeded in getting the town's permission to reroute some streets so that he might enclose all of his property within one wall, he could not very well have asked them to sell him a main street which ran near his property. In 1888, however, the town voted.....

"To give Mr. E. F. Searles the right to improve, at his own expense, the roads and sidewalks opposite his estate, to put in a drinking fountain on the square opposite his residence, to improve the cemetery and

lands adjoining, belonging to the town, - - and such other alterations as he may see fit for the improvement of that part of the town."

He changed the appearance of the street and surrounding territory from that of a country road to that type that is seen in strictly residential districts. He was also successful in preventing it from becoming a noisy thoroughfare. In July of 1889 the Lawrence Daily American, which obviously had a bone to pick with Searles, ran the following article....

"It was enough to make the trees smile to read that list of 'over a hundred names of prominent citizens and businessmen' who protested against the laying of horse car tracks through Lawrence Street. The list as presented contained just 94 names, and of these 21 are directly or indirectly in the employ of Millionaire Searles, one was the paid counsel of Mr. Searles, and of the others one half would be as ready today to sign a petition on the other side - so much for that."

This was the beginning of the newspaper slander that was to continue for many years. It served to increase Searles' dislike for the noisy mill city.

After he returned from his wedding trip to Europe, his chief interest was obviously in the land that surrounded the place where he was born, the land in Methuen. With his wife's wealth at his disposal, Searles proceeded to practically buy up the town. At the rate he was buying property, if he had lived the length of his life again he very possibly would have achieved

what might have been his goal - that of owning the entire village in which he was born, the place he loved.

With very few exceptions his purchases of land radiated in every direction with the old homestead as the center. As the years went by and his holdings increased, his purchases stretched farther and farther away from the original six acres. Between 1888 and the year of his death he transacted two hundred and fifty-three different purchases of land around his home and throughout Methuen. He commissioned five men to buy land for him so that the persons from whom the purchases were being made wouldn't know that it was for the millionaire, Searles, and boost their prices accordingly. Any map of the town, published at the turn of the century, which featured the name of the owner on each parcel of land throughout the town, gives evidence as to the extent of property which Searles owned. Although it is a gross exaggeration to say that he owned the whole town, it is a fact that he owned a good part of it. He owned so much of the town and was so well known that the mapmakers simply put his initials, "E. F. S.", on his property instead of his full name, as it was on all other properties on the map.

In the autumn of 1889 he cancelled the mortgage he had taken out in 1886, before his marriage. He was safely married now and didn't mind his wife knowing that he hadn't always been wealthy.

In fact he wanted the whole town to know that he was at last quite the wealthy man. In September of 1889 the Lawrence Daily American wrote,

"For four long hours Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Millionaire

Searles permitted the public to gaze upon the beauties of his private grounds, and it is said that about two hundred persons availed themselves of the privilege during that time."

Although this notice in the neighboring city newspaper was not half so biting as was most of their gossip about him - only nicknaming him "Millionaire Searles", perhaps out of envy - the following December they printed an article which really laid it on heavy....

"Millionaire Searles again had a British flag flying from his flag staff the first of the week. The act is denounced by parties of all nationalities, and is, to say the least, a discourteous one to the national emblem."

No doubt Searles was upset when he read this. The fact is that he was truly pro British. We must remember that at this time Britain was an extremely powerful empire and Searles' admiration for the brain power that ran it was profound. He had been deeply impressed by Queen Victoria and her court when he visited London on his wedding trip. And later on he saved many newspaper articles concerning the Queen for his huge scrapbook.

From the tone of the following excerpts, it quite likely was envy that caused the writer on the Lawrence Daily American to write as he did:

"Mrs. 'Mark Hopkins' Searles and her husband, of this town, have gone to California where they will spend the coming winter."

And later on,

"A special train chartered for the purpose of bringing Millionaire Searles and wife to town, arrived over the Boston and Maine railroad at eleven o'clock Saturday evening."

By 1890 Searles was secure in the power of his wealth and began to direct operations in his little kingdom. It was a decade in which he was to begin to form his kingdom and feel the power of his wealth. Near his mansion there was a large Baptist Church painted a bright yellow. He volunteered to pay for its painting, whenever it was needed, if he might paint it a color of his own choosing. From then on the building was painted a rich brown and was not so distracting an edifice as it was before, so near his own estate.

In November of 1890 he bought, from John Tenney, one of Charles Tenney's brothers, the land and buildings adjoining the Baptist Church property and informed the pastor that he was going to build a rectory for him. He had three of the houses on the property moved together and proceeded to have his men remodel them into a fine house, much like the ones he had dreamt of building as a youth. The plumber was installing a stove in the finished building one day, when the pastor came in and remarked that the stove was hardly a proper model for a rectory. The plumber answered that he was only following orders, and that he had better see Mr. Searles. The next day Searles told the plumber to lock up the house and bring the keys down to him the next

morning. The deal was off; the church received no rectory. That is the way things went. If the benefactors were the least bit uncautious before they were legally in possession, they never acquired the gift.

Searles secured the electrical power for his estate from dynamos situated in an old woolen mill which he had bought in 1889. This mill was several hundred yards away from his mansion and he was compelled to either buy up the land in between or secure rights from the owners to set poles and string wires across their property. He preferred to own the land in order that he need depend on no one. This was the first time that he tried to buy up a continuous stretch of land and he met with difficulty then as he was to meet it several times afterwards in similar circumstances. Some people wouldn't sell merely because they knew someone else really wanted something they owned; or the land had been in the possession of the same family for generations and the owners wouldn't sell under any conditions. And others, learning that it was Searles who wanted their land, set their prices so high that he had to refuse to buy as a matter of self respect. Even with these difficulties he bought up so much land that by 1891 he was paying nine hundred percent higher taxes than anyone else in town, with the exception of the two largest mills.

In October of 1891, three months after Searles' wife died, he invited the Boston Fusileer Veterans to come to Methuen to marvel at the beauties of his estate. They took the electric cars from Lawrence to Methuen and assembled there to march to the estate

where they were permitted to tour the grounds. Nothing delighted Searles so much as to bewilder people with his personal landscaped paradise. Later in the day the veterans were banqueted by Searles in the town hall. There he was given three rousing cheers, elected an honorary member, and presented with an oak-framed photograph of the company. He responded pleasantly, expressing his pleasure for the gift and saying that Methuen was honored by their visit. Frank Searles himself had become the wealthiest, most honored and respected citizen in town. He had changed from a farmboy to a millionaire; and his land had changed from a farm to a millionaire's showplace.

The trial in which an unsuccessful attempt was made to break his wife's will began in the same month as the Boston Veterans' visit, and was settled out of court in March of the next year, 1892. He then traveled for a year and a half. When he returned to Methuen, at the end of that time, his chief interest was still in expanding his estate.

Although Charles Tenney's Carrère & Hastings-designed French chateau had been completed for a year, the family was only spending summers there since Mr. Tenney's business kept him in New York, and his wife preferred the city to the monotony of the country town. The chateau, called Grey Court, was a beautiful addition to the country landscape. Its delicate lines on the top of a high hill overlook the Searles mansion, towers, walls, rolling green meadow, and the town beyond. Seen from outside the wall-enclosed meadow, it seemed like a grand old monarch guarding the

tournament field below.

With Tenney in New York most of the time, the land buying competition dropped off to nothing. In September, 1893, the New Yorker even conceded to sell Searles a long strip of land and the house on it, adjacent to his meadow, providing that he could retain a right-of-way into the meadow. Searles had always wanted this property but he especially wanted it now as a site for the monument of George Washington which he had commissioned Thomas Ball to sculpt. Later, however, he changed his mind and chose a different site for the monument.

Searles was in the habit of clipping newspaper articles on people or things with whom he was acquainted. For example, Daniel Chester French, the great sculptor who had studied under Thomas Ball and who had once visited his Great Barrington mansion. Thereafter Searles saved every article he came across dealing with Mr. French. Possibly through Truette, the organist who had studied under Guilmant, Searles became acquainted with the famed French composer, and for some unknown reason sent him a picture of his mansion. Guilmant kindly wrote back thanking him for it - in French! Searles pasted the thank-you note in his scrapbook with a firm hand. When the New York newspapers ran a story, with his picture, to mark his appointment as a Director of the Southern Pacific Railroad, he was in his glory. That too was pasted into the scrapbook. In all the clipped articles his name was underlined in blue crayon.

Searles was aware that his plans and actions added to his prestige. In England, while on his wedding trip, he had a picture taken of himself wearing the court dress he had worn when presented to Queen Victoria. He had a copy framed to hang in his mansion. In London he engaged a company of professional genealogists to look up the Searles lineage. It is interesting to know the history of one's family but it is not every man who can afford it.

Searles instructed the company to send him a copy of each book to which they referred in compiling his genealogy, that he might add them to his library. All these books had markers at the pages where the Searles name was mentioned and formed, no doubt, an important part of his library. He donated a copy of the finished genealogy to the Boston Public Library. It is a handsome, fifteen-inch square, leather bound book with many illustrations of famous English cathedrals and towns to add importance to the dry genealogical facts. Although the genealogists found no royal blood, there was one Daniel Searle who was Governor of Barbados in the middle of the seventeenth century. From the size of the book, and the elegance of its printing, the English lineage company must have sent Searles quite a large bill. They even included the Searles coat of arms consisting of a half-embossed shield design. This half-shield was given to all knights, in the days of yore, who had not yet performed a notable deed. After such a deed had been accomplished, the unembossed half of the shield was engraved with an appropriate design to represent the deed. Searles had this half-shield design

put into stone for his mantelpiece, into wood for his paneling, and into metal for his wrought-iron gates.

Because of the prestige his wealth gave him the majority of the townspeople, and some of his employees, were awed by Searles' position and the power this wealth gave to him. Still, there remained those in town who regularly had business with him who felt at ease in his presence. For instance, Joseph Howe, the town treasurer and tax collector, was often visited by Searles for advice about legal matters and gifts to the town. Another was George Wilson, the man in charge of Searles' house moving operations. The old Park Street schoolhouse, where Searles went to school with Arthur Gage, George Wilson, and Johnny Cross, was moved from the corner of Park and Lawrence Streets to a lot several hundred feet farther down Park Street. It stood there until about 1900 when Searles bought it and had it torn down. George Wilson, who became the house mover for Searles, claimed that he and Searles were not only classmates but very good friends. He said that the boys, back about 1850 or 1855, wouldn't play with Frank Searles and that he told them that if they would not let Frank go along with them he would not go either. Obviously, Searles had one good friend in the crowd.

Another man in town, who also seems to have known Searles from way back, was the town drunk. Whenever he saw Searles he would habitually yell, "Hi Frank!", in a boisterous, boozy tone. Searles always smiled and returned the greeting - far from the aloof personage the Lawrence newspapers claimed him to be.

Chapter Four

" PINE LODGE AND THE GREAT ORGAN "

Chapter Four

" PINE LODGE AND THE GREAT ORGAN "

Throughout America, as the factories spread and the railroads covered more and more territory, their owners were making incredible fortunes. It was a materialistic world and the highest virtue was to be the most clever in the competitive game of machine manufacturing. The newly rich could elevate their position in society by displaying awesome evidence of their worldly wealth. Thus, after having amassed their fortunes, they competed with one another in spending great sums to maintain their social positions. European trips, fancy horses, motor cars and yachts partly solved their problem but by the time the '90's rolled around, what really counted was the degree of magnificence and amount of floor space of the mansions in which they lived. While each country of Europe had a definite style of its own, the American millionaires sought to prove their eligibility to membership in the upper class by copying all of them at once. The results were, quite often, fantastic. Architectural crimes or not, the wealthy Americans were proud to live in their castles and mansions and found people eager to staff them from the swarms of immigrants pouring into the country from England, Ireland, and the Continent. Searles fell into step with his wealthy fellow-countrymen by changing the little family farm house into a fantastic, rambling mansion. As early as 1881, even before he retired from Herter Brothers, he had begun remodeling and enlarging the farm house;

but it wasn't until after his marriage, in 1887, that he began to completely remodel it in the Greek Revival style.

When Greece was waging a desperate struggle for freedom against the Turks early in the nineteenth century, sympathy for her here in America ran so high that towns throughout the country began adopting Greek names like Athens, Syracuse, Sparta and Troy. Houses all the way from Massachusetts to Florida began to resemble temples of the gods, creating a style that was popular until the middle of the century, and even later with some people such as Searles. The results of this craze for the classic in architecture was termed the Greek Revival. The liberties which American carpenters took with the Greek details produced an effect half functional, half Greek, but more importantly, gave many American homes an air of clean perfection and dignity.

Searles' additions to Pine Lodge, as he had named the farmhouse, occurred annually and sometimes semi-annually, always in the Greek Revival style, throughout the remainder of his life. It wasn't long before one wing had all the gables and porticoes it could hold, and then another wing would be added. Walls were pushed out, rooms added, and columned porticoes added to them. Then the portico would be enveloped by more rooms and a new one would have to be built. In this process the old well, that was once in the front of the house, was caught in a room of a new wing and became, perhaps, the first indoor well in town. Searles was perhaps happiest when he was planning these additions than he was at any other time in his life. He would often stop reading in the middle of a book

and sketch, on the end pages, an idea for a new addition just as it came to him while he was half reading, half dreaming of his architectural fantasy. He then showed his sketch to his architect, Henry Vaughan of Boston, told him just what he wanted, and plans for another addition would be drawn up.

Some distance to the rear of Pine Lodge there was a very tall, skeleton-framed structure supporting a windmill which drew water from a spring for use in the mansion. As the mansion's new additions became more elaborate and moved closer towards this windmill structure, Searles had the frame enclosed making it into a five story Greek Revival tower to match the style of the growing mansion. It was truly a beautiful windmill.

The townspeople were quick to call Frank Searles eccentric. Envious of his good fortune, they took advantage of the slightest excuse to ridicule his building projects. True, his estate did look rather strange with its high, classic windmill tower showing in the distance between monolithic, bronze tripod-topped columns and with Greek statuary on the lawns and on top of the mansion itself, but it was no stranger than the account of his fortune.

If there was one thing Searles knew well from experience, it was period furniture. As a furniture salesman for Paul and Company of Boston, and interior decorator for Herter Brothers in New York, he became well acquainted with antiques of the Italian, French, and English periods, and particularly enjoyed selecting and buying them during his frequent trips through Europe. As a poor man collects tin Wilkie buttons and makes a card on which to display them, so a wealthy man collects sets of antique furniture of a particular

period and builds rooms in the same period style in which to display them. This furniture collecting hobby naturally requires the building of room after room as the collection grows. And that is probably the main reason that the mansions of wealthy Americans, at the turn of the century when collecting was the fad, were such rambling architectural curiosities. They were simply an integral part of a very expensive hobby. Especially considering Frank Searles' background and interests in fine furnishings, this hobby was, even more likely than in most cases, responsible for the sprawling seventy-four room mansion that he built.

With the wealth he had to back him up, he toured France, England, and Italy searching for pieces to suit his fancy and buying whatever he liked. He seems to have particularly liked French furniture of the Louis XV period. Without doubt, the line of design in this style is much more graceful and flowing than the rather stiff style of the Italian and English. And furniture was not all he collected. He sent back to America shipment after shipment of statuary, vases, relief carvings, tapestries, mirrors, paintings, armor, fine chinaware, and countless knick-knacks to supplement his collection of period furniture.

While in England he purchased a tortoise shell, mother of pearl inlaid chest from a direct descendant of Lord Methuen, the namesake of his hometown in Massachusetts. In France he acquired some of the original tapestry of "The Field of the Cloth of Gold", which dates back to 1520 when Henry VIII of England conferred with Francis I of France in the town of Guisnes, France. These richly adorned tapestries were especially woven for that occasion. They

depict scenes from the life of Scipio Africanus and, until Searles purchased them, had never been out of the possession of the French royal Mazarin family. There he also obtained a marble fireplace from the Tuileries, and a painting, "The Coronation of Napoleon."

He engaged Irving and Casson - Interior Decorators of Boston to do the interiors of the rooms in which he placed his period furniture. Each room had to be done in the same period style as the furniture and required clever craftsmen. A Mr. Lewis Brown, who is still with the Boston company, remembers Searles' frequent visits to the Newbury Street establishment to purchase and select various materials to decorate his rooms. Searles was particularly fond of velours of different shades which he used to cover the walls of his rooms. Mr. Brown recalls pointing out to Searles that his practice of putting newspapers on the walls underneath the velour, to protect it from moths, was needless since moths have a distinct dislike for the velour. Searles, however, continued to use newspapers. Mr. Brown remembers Searles as one of that type of immaculately-dressed, distinguished persons whom it would be highly improper to inform that he was doing something in the wrong way.

After surveying Searles' rambling mansion and its miscellaneous art contents, we can make one deduction: he was intelligent enough to have an active collector's interest in beautiful things but he did not set his standards for perfect beauty as high as his vast wealth made it possible for him to set them. As a result, he was able to collect a good deal more material than he would have if his standards had been higher. It follows that since he collected more

material than he should have, he also had to build a larger mansion to house it than he should have. So he created a curiosity, not a collection of art befitting his wealth.

It would be an injustice to leave our study of Searles' ability as an aesthetic connoisseur at this point when he is not shown in a very favorable light. In later years he may have realized that his mansion was a confusion of wings and gables lacking the simplicity of beauty, and moved out of it to live in a beautiful, English country style, manor house which he built nearby. Even then he could not bring himself to destroy the old mansion, but rather kept it as a curiosity full of curiosities. But that will be described in another chapter.

A good idea of the type of life Searles lived may be seen by examining the important events in his life during one year. In 1895, for example, we learn from various sources what he was doing during different months of the year. From the diaries of Charles Mann, Sr., the town's water commissioner and also a general contractor, we know that in March, 1895, Mr. and Mrs. Mann were among fifty guests who were invited to Pine Lodge on Searles' "at home" day. Mr. Mann wrote in his diary that on that occasion Searles said, "There is nothing too good for Howe Street." No doubt he was referring to what he had done to beautify Marston's Corner, an intersection on Howe Street facing Charles Mann's farm. He had purchased land there, planted trees, erected a monument to the ancient blacksmith after whom the corner was named, and then deeded it to the town. Beautifying various locations about the

town which appealed to him was one of Searles' favorite pastimes. The following month, Mr. Mann and his wife again visited Searles after church one Sunday and he entertained them in the music room. No doubt that this was a memorable occasion for them - being entertained by the wealthiest and most dignified man in town. In the next month, May, Mr. Mann wrote in his diary of a walk he, Searles, and his favorite organist, Everette Truette, had taken across the fields to visit Joseph Howe, the town clerk, tax collector and treasurer. Such were the things that occupied Searles' time.

To break the small town monotony, however, Searles frequently visited Great Barrington or New York. A Great Barrington newspaper clipping, from Searles' scrapbook, tells us that in August of 1895 about a hundred invited guests assembled in the large music room at Searles' mansion, Kellogg Terrace, to listen to an organ concert by Professor Henry Dunham of the Boston Conservatory of Music, and Everette E. Truette of Boston.

"It was a most charming musicale and a memorable event in the summer life of Southern Berkshire."

After 1895, Searles rarely visited the Great Barrington mansion and later began removing its paintings, organ, collection of musical instruments, furniture, grand staircase railings, and the carved doors from Windsor Castle - which he had purchased in 1884 - to his Methuen and Windham estates, as he became absorbed in his future building plans. He also brought all the hired help to Methuen to work for him there rather than dismiss them. They were Arthur Brown, a cockney, who served as Searles' valet; Mr. Bell, his secretary who lived in Boston and went home weekends; and Walter Jones, who served as general handyman.

Trips to New York and Great Barrington, beautifying districts of the town that appealed to him, and holding "at home" days are the major events in Searles' life in this typical year of 1895. They are obviously commonplace events hardly in harmony with his uncommon fortune. In November of 1895, however, an event occurred which is by far the most interesting of all of them. The "Methuen Transcript", the town's only newspaper, announced in its Thanksgiving Day issue, with a four-page supplement of photographs and editorials, that it was using fine new type, that from then on the paper would be much more devoted to news of local interest than it had been, that the presses and offices were functioning smoothly in their new quarters on Broadway, and that they would be open for the public's inspection during the following week. The announcement did not mention that Searles had bought the building four years before this time, remodeled it into a newspaper plant, and organized the new company, all for the purpose of counteracting the uncomplimentary articles that were being directed towards him in the newspapers of the neighboring city of Lawrence.

In 1891 he bought the building from the Methuen Cotton Company where he had worked as a boy. He then arranged with Charles Barnard, who had a job printing office in town, to act as editor, and Edwin Castle, who ran a drug store and grocery, to act as treasurer. Castle was already indebted to Searles for his helping to finance both of his businesses. In return he served as Searles' mouthpiece whenever discussions came up in town meeting concerning Searles' beautifying projects about the town.

Barnard lost no time before writing editorials of a highly

complimentary nature about his boss. The following was taken from Searles' scrapbook of newspaper clippings:

"Most men apprehend the fact that as citizens, they owe certain duties to the town they live in, to the state, and to the nation. They pay their taxes and expect to pay them. It cannot be said that they always do this willingly or honestly, but they know that they must pay something for the laws that protect them, for the roads that give them passage across the country, and for the support of the government.

"So far so good, but there is something very essential beyond this. A great majority of the public fail to appreciate the fact that membership in a social community involves duties just as really and distinctly as family ties or citizenship. Every man owes certain things to the community in which he lives. There is no wise scheme of town improvement to which he does not owe his support and encouragement. There is field for improvement in this respect right here in Methuen. Too many people content themselves with watching and criticizing the larger works of the limited few, forgetting all the while that there are plain duties of a very simple nature to which they ought to be giving their attention. To our knowledge a great many spruce trees were cut down in different sections of the town, at Christmas time. The same work of vandalism goes on through the year.

"Several of the pretty woodlands owned by Mr. E. F.

Searles, have for years suffered from vandal hands. Many beautiful specimens have been cut down and others ruined. On Lawrence Street persons have even reached over the fence to clip branches from the trees. Mr. Searles has given the town some 1500 trees to beautify our roadsides, besides buying prettily wooded spots simply to protect them from destruction. Naturally enough he does not appreciate this sort of treatment and abuse of a good work in the interests of the town.

"It is said that if this and other forms of lawlessness are not ended that he proposes to adopt vigorous means to protect his vast estate upon which he has expended so much money and labor in the effort to beautify it, all of which has in a measure rebounded to the benefit of the town. It seems certain that somebody's lawless and ill-trained boys will get into very hot water if the parents cannot arouse themselves to the need of better teaching.

"It is all very well to ask wealthy and liberal citizens to expend money and energy in the improvement and beautifying of the town, but the public owe it to themselves and the donors to see that such good works are appreciated and merited, especially when this means simply giving protection to that which has already been done. Those who have the responsibilities for the training of the young have a duty in this direction to perform, and there are signs of much laxity."

And another Barnard editorial:

"The Methuen Organ Works, on Broadway, has been the subject of many comments and inquiries as to the business there conducted. To the outsider, it is true, there are few indications of a 'hustling' business. This place has not the general appearance of the ordinary factory, and is devoid of the smoke, dirt and disagreeable odors which so often surround such work shops.

"The impressing classical facade gives no suggestion of the ordinary manufacturing establishment; and as this business has no local dependency, it does not become necessary to advertise by glaring sign boards. It has been proven to the writer by a visit, that there is conducted at this establishment a business of high artistic order and also of a large extent.

"Methuen people ought to feel pleased that such a business is located here. Through its exquisite work this concern has added much lustre to the honored name of the town."

Searles bought the building, in which the organ factory was located, in 1889, a year after his marriage. Situated beside the town's old mill pond, it was originally built as a woolen mill and used a water wheel for power. At first Searles used it to house his United States Tubular Bell Company, which furnished chimes for the bell tower at Pine Lodge. In 1892 he engaged James Treat, an intelligent Boston organ builder, to build organs for him in the

Methuen factory. One John Ingraham, who was very friendly with Searles, acted as foreman. The year that the Boston Symphony Hall was being readied for the public, Searles and Ingraham stopped in to view the new organ that was being installed by Ernest Skinner, builder of many fine instruments and now residing in Brookline, Massachusetts. Mr. Skinner describes Searles, when they were introduced, as tall, well dressed and wearing a light brown moustache. He also states that Treat built about fourteen organs in the Methuen factory. Searles gave most of them to church groups.

The organ factory building was a very interesting structure. To begin with, its cellar beams were made from logs which had been cut only on two sides, the other two being left with the bark still clinging. Each jointed timber from cellar to attic was neatly and painstakingly pegged with long wooden pegs. Huge eight by twelve timbers braced from various angles by other heavy beams supported three stories and a large attic. During its ownership by Searles, a two-story portico supported by four large wooden columns, another two-story wing, the bottom floor of which contained an arched underpass for a driveway, and an elaborate interior stairway were all added. He also built, by tearing through the first and second floors, a heavily decorated organ test-hall, the ceiling cupola of which protruded up through the attic. The attic of the building, as a result of the many alterations, had become a maze of rooms and stairways leading to attics and rooms in lower adjoining wings.

From the street, the building, which had been painted dark

grey, looked like a deserted opera house. Because large, old trees surrounded the building, it appeared to be in a half-light even in the daytime.

Through Searles' venture into the organ building business he naturally came into contact with many different church groups. Although he pretended that this was a business venture, it really was only the medium by which he continued to practice interior decorating. This is proven by the fact that it was his practice, after having secured the option for building an organ, to proceed to completely remodel the interior of the church or even to build a new one at his own expense. He built new churches for five different church groups.

Searles saved the newspaper notices of the recitals of the organs which he donated to various local churches. He evidently was pleased that the organs were being put to good use. There follows one of editor Barnard's Methuen Transcript accounts of a recital held in the factory's elaborate testing hall on an organ which was to go to St. Paul's church in Lawrence:

"At the conclusion of the exhibition of the new organ, the party was privileged to make a tour of inspection through the adjoining rooms, including 'Sawgrist Hall', where a magnificent organ has been erected for private use. Considerable time was thus spent in viewing the collection of old and rare instruments, beautiful tapestries and paintings, richly carved antique furniture and many other works of art.

"When this company was organized it was the intention of the parties interested to establish a business of high order. The success of the concern has been due in a large degree to the deep interest of the principal member of the company whose main object has been to attain perfection in organ building, rather than to realize large profits on the work undertaken. It has been conceded by eminent organists of this country that one of the large organs built by this company, as a memorial, is without exception the finest in the world."

James Treat, John Ingraham, David Bruce, Dan Cogswell, Eben Sawyer and George Whiting all worked for Searles in the organ factory and boarded nearby at the Park Street Boarding House which was operated by Arthur Gage who went to school with Searles.

The Methuen Organ Company, under the direction of James Treat, built the organ which Searles presented to the Grace Episcopal Church of San Francisco. As many invitations were sent out to the people of Methuen and Lawrence as the factory's hall would accommodate to be present at the recital to test the organ previous to shipment. Mr. Everette E. Truette of Boston played for the greater part of the recital. The stained native oak of this organ was beautifully worked and the architectural design was by Henry Vaughan, Searles' own architect. After the testing, Mr. Treat accompanied the instrument to California to supervise its erection. Its estimated cost was \$50,000. It was eventually lost in the fire and earthquake of 1906.

Searles clipped a newspaper article, for his scrapbook, describing a huge old organ that was going to be sold at auction in Boston. The organ's mechanism was built in Germany in 1863 and the case was carved and assembled in New York by Herter Brothers, the decorating company for whom Searles had worked. It had stood in the Boston Music Hall for twenty years and then was sold to make room for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It remained in storage until 1897 when Searles bought it at auction. According to an article Mr. Treat wrote for a Boston paper at the time of the auction, the interior mechanism was obsolete and worthless. Between 1905 and 1909 Searles had the works removed in his factory and installed new electrical devices. It is probably the only organ in existence which had a hall especially built to house it. In most cases the organ is merely a furnishing for the hall.

The magnificently carved case dominates the entire hall so that one hardly notices the exquisite ceiling - rather only the dark, overdecorated organ case. The atlantes, at either side of the console, are the distinguishing features of this organ case. They are accentuated carvings of masculine strength at supreme perfection. Like each blast of the organ, each muscle in the upper portions of these male torsos is full and has the perfection that is part of mature development. They are colossal pillars of power supporting a gigantic burden. Each muscle of the chest, abdomen, and arms, below the massive yet finely modeled face, is tensed to the tremendous weight each is bearing. They are enormous yet perfect. As a separate feature, their perfection

would seem incredible but as an integral part of the case they are the keys to the strength of the complete organ.

Recently, after the building had been shut up for years, a friend and I, at the age when boys don't realize the penalties to be experienced for entering private property, skipped school one day and cautiously climbed into what to us was a deserted medieval palace. Sawdust, woodshavings, and spiderwebs covered more prize trash than we had ever before seen. We were in ecstasy over the fortune of junk within our grasp. We found old calendars on the walls, amazing little parts of organs, a pair of old spectacles, a board made of many different kinds of wood advertising organ casements, busts of Mozart, Chopin and Beethoven in the organ testing room, an old bellows used to melt the lead for the organ pipes, three murals painted on wood so worm eaten as to make them seem six hundred years old, hundreds of organ pipes that made deep and high sounds when we blew into them, a funny old hat with a pin on it that read "1909", and a million and one other things, worthless to many, treasured by small boys. In the attic we were frightened by the dark corners and the startled pigeons, yet we dared to explore every room and the contents of each mysterious box. We looked down on the street from a high attic window and wondered if anyone would discover us in our castle of musty halls and treasure laden rooms. For many days we stealthfully visited our child's wonderland, each visit more exciting than the last. Then, one night as I lay in my bed dreaming of finding things which only a small boy's mind could conceive, I restlessly turned onto my left

side facing the window and vaguely noticed a distinct red glow in the eastern sky. I quickly dressed and ran to where I could look across the river into a miniature valley where the building stood, now a gigantic mass of flames and falling timbers. Thus the fate was sealed for one of the town's old buildings and the basis of more than one of my imaginative dreams.

On the wall of the especially-built organ hall Searles placed a six foot by twelve foot relief-carving, in Carrara marble, of "The Aurora" by Guido Reni. "The Aurora" is that well known scene which depicts the herald of the dawn by the familiar figure in a horse drawn chariot riding over the clouds with angels above. The owners of the Pitti Palace, in Florence, Italy, gave their permission for Searles to have this relief carving copied. It was finished by Carlo Nicoli in 1897.

It will be remembered that in 1889 Searles commissioned Thomas Ball, the American sculptor who had his studio in Florence, Italy, to do a heroic sized statue of George Washington. Searles immediately began buying house lots across the street from his mansion, and had the houses torn down or moved to make space large enough to accomodate the monument. After Mr. Ball had the bronze figures for the monument cast in Munich it was shipped to this country and delivered at Chicago where Searles permitted it to be displayed for the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. After remaining in Chicago for five years it was brought to Methuen to be assembled at its final resting place. On February 21, 1900 Searles prepared to have the statue's temporary wooden housing dismantled in the night in order to surprise the townspeople on the next day,

Washington's Birthday. Workmen with heavy draft horses were told to report to the site after dark and say nothing to anybody. They came in a terrible downpour of rain and worked all night taking down the heavy wooden structure which had hidden the monument for over a year. The next morning the people of Methuen saw a monument worthy of a position in any park in any of the largest cities in the country.

Mr. Ball resided in Florence, Italy for thirty years, the last seven of which were engaged in executing the statue of Washington. He was a native of Boston, where several of his works may be seen, notably, his bronze figures of Charles Sumner and Josiah Quincy, his marble statue of John Andrew, and his equestrian statue of Washington. He is represented in New York's Central Park by his colossal bronze of Webster. Washington, D. C. has his "Lincoln Freeing the Slave." P. T. Barnum sat before him for the bronze figure of the circus man which is in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

"The figure of Washington," said Mr. Ball speaking of the Methuen monument, "is alone fifteen feet high. The Father of His Country is shown with his military cloak wrapped around him, his left hand on his sword, and his right extended over a female figure representing Oppression - young Columbia, fettered. Around the monument are three companion figures" - one at each corner - "Revolution, an almost nude male, bearing a drawn sword; Victory, a female, with a wreath in one hand and branches of palm and oak in the other; and lastly, Cincinnatus, seated on his plough, as a suggestive supplement. Between these emblematic figures and that

of Washington" - in niches cut into the main shaft - "are busts of four of his favorite generals, Lafayette, Lincoln, Knox and Green. All the figures are of bronze; the column itself is of marble."

This work of Mr. Ball is distinguished from the works of other sculptors by the fact that although it is sixty feet tall and has figures of immense proportions, it is executed in its entirety with a careful regard for detail.

The monoliths adorning the western tip of the Searles estate, across the street from the monument, were originally set up in 1838 on Wall Street, New York, in front of the Bank of America. The pure bronze tripods surmounting these pillars are accurate Greek reproductions. The pillars are of Quincy granite and stand fifty feet high.

On March 10, 1900, at the Methuen Town Meeting, Mr. Emerson offered the following resolution which was adopted unanimously by a rising vote:

"Whereas our townsman Edward F. Searles has erected near the center of the village a monument of rare and majestic beauty, and whereas this monument both by its historical interest and artistic execution will give distinction to the town so long as marble and bronze endure, be it resolved by the citizens of Methuen that we express to Mr. Searles our great appreciation of the Washington monument by Thomas Ball, and a deep sense of gratitude for its noble and refining influence."

In 1899 Searles went to New York, as one of the newly elected board of directors of the Southern Pacific Railroad, replacing Thomas E. Stillman the New York lawyer who had arranged the Searles-Hopkins marriage agreement of 1887. Stillman had been a director representing, in conjunction with General Thomas H. Hubbard, the interests of E. F. Searles ever since the latter acquired possession of Southern Pacific stock through the death of his wife, formerly Mrs. Mark Hopkins. The following newspaper article from Searles' scrapbook explains what happened:

"When E. F. Searles found himself a fourth-owner in the Southern Pacific Company he was without any experience in railroad matters and felt it necessary to secure the advice and services of gentlemen who were qualified and able to look after his railroad interests. General Hubbard and Mr. Stillman were law partners at that time, and he selected them for the responsible trust. A partnership arrangement was entered into, the Southern Pacific stock being apportioned among the three men, with the understanding that Searles was to be relieved of all work in connection with the railroad corporation's business. When Mr. Stillman decided to withdraw from the directorate, this partnership was dissolved."

Searles kept a rather complete scrapbook of everything in the New York newspapers concerning the Southern Pacific Railroad. Although he was unwilling to devote his full attention to big business, it is evident from the scrapbook that he was at least attempting to keep informed.

While riding about the countryside in Methuen and across the state line in Salem, New Hampshire, during the pleasant New England summer months, Searles often saw charming little farms, as has everyone who has ever ridden in the country. Likewise, those who take country drives regularly have become more particular as to just what type of farm meets their standards of "charming." Some insist upon a long, sloping-roofed farmhouse on top of a grassy knoll surrounded by old knarled oaks. Others hope to see an old pump on the well in front of the farmhouse with a mammoth red barn adjoining, and graceful hundred year-old elms in the pastures. It is simply a matter of choice. The most thoughtful country tourist looks at an "almost charming" bit of landscape and daydreams about what he would do to it to make it really "perfectly charming." Then the pretty spot passes out of sight and the dream is forgotten. Unlike most people, however, Searles enjoyed the uncommon pleasure of being wealthy enough to be able to buy outright any charming country farm he happened to notice and then make the changes that he thought needed to be made. If he really liked the landscape that he saw from his neat black carriage, and if the owner would sell, he could actually buy it and as many others as appealed to him. To the type of Yankee, land-loving man that Searles was, this ability to purchase, change, and enjoy was nothing short of the miraculous fulfillment of an incredible lifelong wish.

He had, by this time, purchased all the land surrounding the western slope of the hill from which the Tenney castle looked down upon his mansion, and about two hundred acres on the other side of the hill. Thus, the Tenney estate formed a barrier across the top of the hill separating the eastern from the western halves of his

estate and he had to take one or the other of the public roads that ran on either side of the hill to get to his land on the other side of this hill. This was a great pity to Searles since he was striving to create an English-type country estate which is supposed to be independent of all public utilities, and he knew that Tenney would never sell any portion of his estate. Tenney never did sell and Searles habitually rode up East Street along the south side of the hill to reach his land which he called, "The Highfield." He gave it that name for the reason that it included the eastern half of the top of this hill and some of it was actually higher than Tenney's land. He rode there frequently, to gain a panoramic view of the neighboring city of Lawrence.

Highfield was a really charming stretch of farmland and woodland. It had high green pastures, productive apple orchards, and groves of majestic oak trees. Searles had winding roads laid out through the groves and dammed up a brook to form a miniature pond which still bears his name. He would drive out through the gateway at Pine Lodge, ride up East Street, enter Highfield and drive along the roads, through the woods and pastures, from one side of the hill to the other. Then he crossed the public street that runs along the other side of Tenney's hill and drove along another private road, which he had made through other woodlands that he owned, and into another realm.

Chapter Five

" STILLWATER AND STANTON HARCOURT "

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" STILLWATER AND STANTON HARCOURT "

When Searles crossed that public street he entered, what to my mind, is the most interesting of all his real estate holdings. It was essentially the result of his attempt to acquire and plan such an extensive estate as those of the great landowners of the old world. Over a period of approximately six years he purchased, through his numerous agents, about six hundred acres of New Hampshire farm and woodland commencing at his property in Methuen and stretching northwards for three miles over the state line into Salem, New Hampshire. It included a shallow, lily-covered pond called "World's End", which alone covered over one hundred and fifty acres. The enlargement and development of this project was a chief interest during the remainder of his life.

His interest in this, his most extensive project, was no doubt influenced while driving through the neighboring countryside. The possibility that the farmers, who owned the land he wanted, would sell seemed favorable and in 1895 he set his agents to work. As homestead after homestead was deeded to him the farmers caught on to his scheme and if an agent approached them, whom they suspected was working for Searles, they did not hesitate to put a fancy price on their land. For this reason he changed his agents quite frequently. Some farmers, however, refused to sell at any price, not only because their labor and their lives, actually, were in their fifty or sixty acres, but also because they resented the idea

of one man owning so much land. Over a period of six years, one resisting farmer, a Mr. Butler of Salem, was approached as many different times by as many different agents. Mr. Butler was urged to sell by farmers to the north of him whose land Searles had promised to buy if only Butler would sell out. Mr. Butler refused to sell however and is living today, at the age of ninety-two, on the same land which stopped Searles' northward progress.

After thus being compelled to limit his, let us say, private touring reserve to six hundred acres or so, Searles proceeded to build walls and gate houses around and in it. A group of immigrant Italian laborers, under the direction of Charles Mann, who was also one of Searles' real estate agents, built the walls at the rate of approximately a mile a year. These solidly constructed stone walls were seven feet high, four feet thick at the base, and a foot and a half thick at the crest. Mann's diary entry for June 11, 1896 reads, "Searles and Edith (Edith Littlefield, Searles' cousin who served as house secretary to him at Pine Lodge), or Searles and Mr. Bell (Searles' business secretary) drop around to Stillwater every evening about five or six p.m. to see progress on roads and walls."

The walls follow the country roads for three miles in Salem, New Hampshire, alone. Had he been able to purchase the few remaining tracts of land, which he hoped to obtain to complete his reserve before he lost interest in the project, he would have enclosed the entire area with the same imposing type of wall.

Within the area which he was able to acquire he began a splendid transformation. The singing Italian laborers had already

cleared most of the farm and woodlands of rocks in order to build the walls. Not according to plan, but as the ideas for improvement came to him, he had gate houses built, remodeled some of the farmhouses into other gatehouses, laid out roads through the woodlands, built quaint, water-washed stone bridges over all the brooks and set out grove after grove of pine trees. Because many of the farms which he bought had the farmhouse on one side of a public road and the barn on the other, and since he wished to have an entirely private domain, it was necessary for him to buy the old road from the town and build a new one around it. In the course of the enlargement of his reserve it was necessary for him to do this several times. The town was always a willing member to these transactions because the new roads were always good roads and Searles was a very heavy taxpayer.

Searles loved anything old; for that reason he seldom had any of the old farmhouses, which he had purchased, torn down. Rather, he remodeled them and moved them away from the road and farther into the reserve for privacy. At first the Italian laborers, who often numbered forty, lived in many of them but later the houses were taken over by the farmhands from Maine and Vermont whom Searles hired to work the farmland within the reserve. The only old house which he had demolished was one built in 1770 and faced the site where he intended to build a country manor house.

He had the farmhouses remodeled along the lines of the country houses he had seen in Europe, but more specifically, he searched through the pages of the collection of architectural books in his

library until he found the plans of the type that struck his fancy in Europe and the British Isles. He did not always adhere exactly to the plans, by any means, but rather added a gable here, an archway there or made any alteration whatever. He was a decorator not an architect. He did, however, know just what he wanted and if the results of his instructions, as to the construction of a house, did not look as he had hoped it would, it was torn down and rebuilt.

His wealth enabled him to construct his buildings solidly of the best materials available. This was to the advantage of the artisans whom he employed, actually by the dozens. They were able to gain experience at working with good material and were allowed plenty of time to do a good job. Many of the men who were construction apprentices employed by Searles are master craftsmen today.

"World's End Pond", completely surrounded by his domain, became restricted to his private use, was renamed "Stillwater" by him and the work of beautifying its shores was begun. Much of the banking that followed the system of roads part way around the pond was reinforced with water-washed stone walls, and a half-dozen water-washed stone bridges were built over the pond's tributary brooks and the outlet brook. He raised the level of the mouth of the outlet in order to keep the pond at its maximum depth. But even so, the deepest part of the pond had only eight feet of water over a muddy bottom. Most of the pond was only about four feet deep. Farther along the pond's outlet brook, where it crosses a

main road, he built an elaborate bridge and dammed the brook higher in order to make it appear more sizable on his property. Beside the main tributary brook, which runs close by the manor house, he built a stone tower with barred windows, and an adjoining wall so constructed as to seem like one of the old ruined castles of Europe. He had miniature waterfalls constructed along this same brook and deepened and otherwise improved its entire course to its very sources in the marshes and swamps. How strange an experience it is for some one uninformed to stumble upon one of these quaint bridges in the midst of the wild woods. He feels as though he has been suddenly transported to a romantic scene in the old world.

In "Stillwater", Searles' name for the whole estate, as well as the pond, he created a little self-sufficing village. He was the lord of the manor, so to speak, and the two dozen or so employees who lived in the smaller surrounding houses were his villagers. One such villager's house looks as though it was a medieval serf's dwelling transported, foundation and all, from the old world.

The villagers need never have left Stillwater, for their daily requirements were all to be had within the Searles walls. As with all farms of that day, water was supplied from wells close to each building. Almost all the food needed to supply the members of the little village was raised right on the place. They slaughtered pigs and sheep in the fall and grew their own vegetables which the women canned for use during the winter. And they made sweet cider in the cider press at Dairy Court, where there was also a

grist mill. All the fuel used for warmth was cut from woods in the area. Later, when Searles had a dynamo constructed to supply the manor house with electricity, the fuel for that was also wood cut on the property. It was cut into firewood with the use of an old fashioned boiler engine in the courtyard. The teamsters cut hay and did all the other regular farm labor in the summer and cut wood and ice in the winter. The ice was stored for summer use in a little ice house close to the pond and then brought by wagon to Pine Lodge during the summer. Every other day a wagon went from Dairy Court to Pine Lodge to carry down ice, farm produce, milk, and a jug of water from a spring, the water of which Searles was particularly fond.

Thus, on coming down Pond Street into the little village, one entered a community independent of the outside world. And this is the exact dictionary definition of a country seat as it is known in England, for that is what Stillwater actually was, a country seat. It had an atmosphere all its own. Its rustic bridges, stone walls, stuccoed buildings, quaint gateways and English manor house transport one into a different world. The unique layout of the buildings and their English country village style of architecture give the place a charm to be found no where else. It is, even today, a cause of romantical wonder for those who chance to pass down shady Pond Street.

The wife of Albert Lowe, the painting restorer for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, recalls seeing Searles on several of his daily afternoon drives along the shaded roads at Stillwater. Mr. Lowe,

with his wife and daughter, lived in a little stone lodge at Stillwater over a period of seven years centering around the time of the First World War. He engaged the use of the lodge for the purpose of painting the exquisite landscape and to escape the clamor of industrial Lawrence. After receiving Mr. Lowe's correspondence in regards to the rental of the stone lodge, Searles, because he was in sympathy with Mr. Lowe's artistic leanings and desire to get away from the noisy city, gave his consent and later obliged Mr. Lowe by satisfying his request to show him the art accumulated at Pine Lodge.

Mr. Houston, who lived near the stone lodge at the Oak Hill farmhouse, one of the twelve villagers' dwellings at Stillwater, and who was Searles' head foreman, told Mr. Lowe that Searles had a Japanese cook who had once lived at this lodge previous to Mr. Lowe's occupancy. Occasionally, when Searles was inspecting Stillwater, the cook would prepare his dinner for him there. Mr. Houston was in charge of the sheep at Stillwater, and his two young sons herded them. One of these boys, who is now a professor at Tufts College, often thought that the pond was originally named "World's End" because of the depth of the mud in it. Due to this mud it was always full of white water lillies.

Searles bought a launch, built a boat house, and constructed water-washed stone piers at either side of the pond. The very first day they tried the launch, it became stuck in the mud and water lillies. The party shouted for an hour before they were able to summon someone down from the farmhouse for assistance. Charles Mann, Searles' construction foreman, made an entry in his diary

shortly afterwards, in June, 1896 - "talk by Bell and Searles of dredging Stillwater." And the surprised old pond was dredged.

Another entry in the same month mentioned that the "foundation for lodge at Stillwater being built." And in the next month, Searles, "shows plans for lodge at Stillwater." When it was finished, its size and style made it actually more of a manor house than a simple lodge. It was called Dairy Court because his original intentions were that it should be a simple dairy farm. It has large, beam-ceilinged rooms with beautiful paneling, huge fireplaces, graceful stairways, and enough window space to allow an abundance of light to flood within. The sharply peaked slate roofs cover gabled rooms whose high windows look out upon the higher branches of the surrounding pines and the buildings around the courtyard below.

Mr. Houston's son, reflecting upon his days at Stillwater so many years ago, recollects that Searles was very particular about keeping the heavy wooden gates, at the entrance to Stillwater Manor grounds, closed at all times. He is positive that Searles was the most reclusive man he has ever known. To a stranger who chanced to drive down the shaded country road, by the walls, the closed gates must have been a wonderful reminder of the baronial estates of medieval days when such gates were closed for protection from marauding neighbor barons.

Searles had an idea that farmers from Maine and Vermont made the best farm hands because they were literally born with practical farming experience and he hired them whenever he could. Before 1912

an approximate census of the inhabitants of Stillwater village would be as follows: twelve immigrant Italian laborers, the four McCloud boys and their sister Christine, a Scotch family from Nova Scotia, the five members of the Houston family, Mr. and Mrs. Akers who made the deliveries to Pine Lodge, Davis and Hurlbert, farmers from Vermont, and a man named Kelley. The farm help, exclusive of the Italians, ate at the gate house, where the McCloud boys' sister Christine, served them. The Italians served themselves at another house and farmers who lived near Stillwater recall selling eggs and other products to them. The attitude of the help towards Searles, was in general, good; he always gave presents to the Houston boys at Christmas time.

The Oak Hill farm was one of the first that Searles bought near the pond which can be seen from the house. After remodeling the simple farmhouse into a charming country place with the usual Searlesian architectural touches, he made it his headquarters while the manor house was being built. It has an interesting enclosed courtyard, a tall wooden tower at one end of the house with rooms for the farmhands, and a large carriage house across the yard. Judge Cox, of Lawrence, spent four summers there as a gentleman-farmer before he bought, from Searles, his present farm nearby.

The Judge recalls that while he was at Oak Hill Searles asked him if he could make use of the oxen that he had at another farm and for which he no longer had any use. Judge Cox said that he could and they were brought to Oak Hill. The oxen being hoisted up for shoeing in the ox sling in the barn's courtyard presented

a picture that could have been taken right out of the middle ages.

Searles admired Judge Cox's success at gentleman farming. While he had all kinds of equipment at Stillwater, the best of barns and more than enough men, he just couldn't get his lands to produce the way the Judge's did. It was obvious that he was more interested in having walls and towers built than in any income his farms could produce.

At first all the buildings at Stillwater were painted red; Searles' favorite color. Then he decided that grey would be more in keeping with the landscape - so everything was re-painted grey. He had a romantic name, on a sign, for every building, pond, or grove that he owned. On a barn that stood on the site where he built the manor house there was a sign reading "Fercroft." Names like Groomont, West Moorland, Dairy Court, Oak Hill, Appleside and Spring Brook Cottage were all products of his imagination. One architectural effect that seems to have been a favorite with Searles is the false pigeon-loft holes that appear in the gables of three of the buildings at Stillwater - the manor house, a little caretaker's cottage that is still painted red opposite the manor, and the gatehouse to West Moorland. But then again, they may owe their existence to Henry Vaughan, Searles' English architect, since this effect is common throughout England.

West Moorland, which probably received its name from the fact that it stands on the edge of a moor in the western part of Stillwater, was occupied in later years by a Mrs. Fitzgerald and her family. She was one of Searles' favorite cooks and many a time when he tired of the food at Pine Lodge he made the long buggy

ride up to Salem just to sit at her table. The two, long, glass arched-roofed greenhouses, which were at West Moorland, set it apart from the other places at Stillwater. The manor house had a greenhouse but it was only half the size of the ones that were at West Moorland. They supplied fresh flowers for Pine Lodge the year-round.

Northgate was the name Searles gave to the house and gate in the entrance to the northern corner of Stillwater's six hundred acres. The gatehouse, which was built in 1776, was on the north side of the public road and the barn was on the south side until he bought the property and built a new road which he exchanged with the town for the old one, in order that he might have both buildings within his wall-enclosed area. He remodeled the house to suit his tastes as if he were going to live there, just as he did with every house that came into his possession. If the place had more rooms than he liked, he had the partitions torn down and made larger rooms. When he bought the land on the northern shore of the pond, adjacent to the Northgate property, he acquired the old Ayer house, the foundation of which previously held a structure used as a garrison against the Indians. He moved the house back away from the road but preserved the well that stood by the road by building his high wall out and around it.

Two or three of the houses at Stillwater village were moved there from Methuen, across the state line. Searles would buy tracts of land including buildings and, desiring to use the space for a monument or another building, moved the old houses to other locations rather than tear them down.

Beside one of the charming miniature ponds, Searles created near his manor house, he erected a huge barn, the architecture of which could easily have been used on a mansion as on a dwelling for farm animals. There he kept the pony and little basket carriage his invalid mother had used at Pine Lodge years before. When he later recuperated at Stillwater, during a whole summer, after breaking his ankle while watching the construction of his castle in Windham, New Hampshire, he made good use of them to make inspection trips about the estate. He was lame for a year after that and noticeably restricted in the long walks which he had been accustomed to take.

Searles had, perhaps, an art so subtle that it is hard to distinguish as an art. His taste for the most appropriate style of architecture for his mansions, and his selection of a location for them was his art; if such a procedure that necessitates the possession of vast wealth can be called art. He could select an ordinary stretch of farmland and so plan the roads, house location, walls and landscaping as to make it appear that it was always meant to look the way it did when he was finished with it. True to every artist's natural practice of completely disassociating himself with his art once he had finished with it, Searles completed one mansion after another and then left each one of them to go on to the next. Yet each is so perfect in its setting as to most assuredly excite the imagination of those who chance to find them. If any person is in the least affected by the charms of beauty and he passes down between the rows of trees on either side of Pond Street, by the moors

and mansion at Stillwater, he will most certainly be delighted at the awe for charm he will feel when he sees the picture in reality that Searles painted.

It is evident that no matter what Searles built, additions to his birthplace, Pine Lodge, or castle or mansion in New Hampshire, they only held his interest while they were being built. As each was finished, he seemed to want to forget about it and go on to the next. While there was construction activity at each place, and while the locality was still new to him, his interests and his spirits were high. It might be said that his building projects were all that made life bearable for him. He was a lonely man despite his wealth, and his daily inspections at each of his projects were his only defense against complete loneliness. By the time he had lost interest in Stillwater, in 1908, he was already deeply absorbed in another project that was vaguely connected with the mansion and its six hundred acres. There could be no doubt that they made a charming country seat. However, Stillwater wasn't quite what Searles wanted. Besides country mansions, he had seen other things while he was in Europe - specifically, castles atop high hills overlooking clear blue lakes far below. In 1902, even before the Stillwater estate was completed, he decided to build a castle and began buying land six miles farther north in Windham, New Hampshire. Just as the flat moorland at Stillwater was a perfect setting for a manor house, so was the site Searles selected in Windham a perfect setting for a castle. The thirty or forty pieces of farmland that he acquired

in Windham included the highest hill in the area and overlooked gently sloping meadowland and two beautiful blue lakes.

Perhaps the real reason why Searles decided to build a castle was to correct what to him was a long standing unfortunate situation. His neighbor in Methuen, Charles Tenney, although not anywhere near as wealthy as he, lived in a castle on top of the hill that overlooked his own wooden mansion. Now he too would live on top of a hill, even if it meant moving out of state.

In 1905, after he had secured about 1400 acres of land, construction on the hilltop castle was begun. It was to be a one-quarter scale replica of the medieval Tudor castle called Stanton-Harcourt, in Oxfordshire, England. Henry Vaughan, Searles' English architect, designed the replica into twenty rooms including servants' quarters. The original castle in England was built in 1450. Its Tudor-style architecture is characterized by a great semicircular bay window which runs the height of the building. It has a gatehouse erected in 1540, a vast kitchen and a "Pope's Tower." Searles' Stanton-Harcourt also has a very fine kitchen and a replica of this "Pope's Tower", so constructed as to be suitable for guests' quarters. The Harcourt family, which came to England from France with William the Conqueror, still inhabits the old castle.

Searles' replica in Windham is a striking structure with battlemented towers jutting high into the sky above the hilltop. A caretaker once described it as "a pile of stones on top of the hill." Actually it is a combination of carefully cut granite, fieldstones, and dark red sandstone fitted into the architect's intricate design. Searles' love for good workmanship is manifest

in the richly carved oak paneling, hand-hewn timbered ceilings, and grand fireplaces throughout the castle. It has walls eight feet thick, mullioned windows, great arched gateways, spacious rooms and a perfectly carved oak staircase. This staircase, a masterpiece in woodcarving craftsmanship, leads to the chambers above, and to a large stateroom on the third floor of the castle. The Gothic-style doors of the castle's main hall were removed from the Great Barrington mansion. They originally came from Windsor Castle in England where Searles had discovered them in the shop of a dealer in antiquities. The living room has a marble fireplace which reputedly came from Napoleon's favorite room in the Tulleries grand palace, Paris. The Searles coat of arms is richly carved into the oak paneling above this fireplace.

Every day Searles would drive the ten miles from Methuen, Massachusetts, to Windham, New Hampshire, to watch the construction of his castle. He would have his cook prepare a pot of baked beans to take along. When he remained in Windham overnight, he stayed at the old Morrison house near the site of the castle. He acquired this property, however, only after Stanton-Harcourt was well on its way towards completion. He could not acquire the homestead until the last of the Morrises died; then he purchased the property, and, as a last step in making the entire district completely his own, bought from the town of Windham, a schoolhouse which was, at the time, completely surrounded by his land.

Accordingly, on November 6, 1906, the town of Windham voted to discontinue the roads which ran through the Searles estate and to accept the new ones he had built. This was, "to take effect at

such a time as Edward F. Searles shall convey to the school district of the town of Windham a schoolhouse and a lot of land acceptable to the committee." to replace the old schoolhouse within the limits of his property. Needless to say, the new schoolhouse greatly surpassed the old one in proportions and elegance of architectural design.

One day Searles was up on the roof over the semi-circular bay window of the castle with one of the workmen. He said, "What do you think of that, Jack?!" Referring to the panoramic view from that vantage point.

Jack May answered, "Beautiful, just beautiful!" Then, referring to a new, graceful, triple-arched bridge over a stream in the meadow at the foot of the hill. Searles asked, "Well, what do you think I should call it?"

Young Jack May pondered for a moment and then suggested, "The Bridge of Sighs."

"Well, why that?" asked Searles. Jack replied, "Because I don't own it!"

When the castle was finished, in 1915, Searles celebrated the occasion at Pine Lodge by inviting about a dozen guests. Among them were Mr. Charles Tenney, Henry Vaughan, and Henry Cabot Lodge, Sr. The Lodge family, including the present Henry Cabot Lodge, later spent a week vacationing at the castle.

Chapter Six

" MADE TO ORDER "

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Searles had been showering gifts upon the town of Methuen partly out of benevolence - but also to achieve something that was obscure to the public yet important to him. And though the townspeople did not know that these gifts had been made until after they had already been accepted by higher town officials, they were grateful and showed appreciation. Actually, Searles' money had bent the townspeople to his will. Slowly but surely he was establishing himself as the chief benefactor of the town and at the same time accomplishing many little changes that he could not otherwise have made without the public's consent. Each building he erected for the town was exactly to his liking in style and location. Some, like the high school, were built so the more beautiful Tudor-style facade would face his own estate. close by and present a grand appearance chiefly for his own benefit. At the same time, the townspeople, aware of the fact that he was saving thousands of dollars for them through his gifts, were becoming more and more obliged to him even though they would have no say as to where or how the various buildings would be built. He made them for the town but they were made to his order. In fact, he gradually made over a large part of the town to his own liking and met with very little opposition. In the face of his gifts it was hard for the town to object to anything that he chose to

undertake. The very magnitude of these gifts made any show of non-compliance to his wishes seem indecent. The townspeople tread lightly around him and his feelings because it paid to, and he paid, quite generously.

The Emmanuel Primitive Methodist Church (1901) in Methuen was the first of five churches that Searles erected as a gift to a church group and it also was the smallest, being a single-story wooden structure finished in stucco and brown trim. In his deed to the church group, for the land on which the building was erected, he made the restriction that no intoxicating liquors were ever to be sold on the premises. If the property was ever used for anything other than religious purposes it was to revert back to him or his heirs. He made the same provisions in his deed for the St. George's Primitive Methodist Church, the second that he built in Methuen. Also, and this is most important, if the town of Methuen should ever be annexed to any other municipality, the property would be forfeited to him. The City of Lawrence had been trying for some time to annex little Methuen, causing Searles much anxiety. This clause in the church deed was no doubt a strong force in influencing the parishioners to help him to keep the town rural and independent from Lawrence. Certainly his money was the power that enabled him to make the town to order.

St. George's Primitive Methodist Church (1904) is a small brick Romanesque structure with a domed tower at the left of the facade. It is the largest and probably the most costly of the five churches. The most interesting feature of this church is the large, richly

stained organ which occupies a prominent position. It could very well be that Searles built the church as high-vaulted and simple, as its interior decorations are, so as not to detract from the beautiful organ - for this was a special organ and required a special setting. For many years he had used it as his exhibition organ set up in the organ testing hall of his factory.

The All Saints Episcopal Church (1904) on Broadway, Methuen, is typical of the small parish church one would expect to see in a small English rural town. Its stucco and brown exterior trim in simple geometrical design is more pleasing than it is elaborate. Although this church is smaller than the St. George's Primitive Methodist Church, which Searles also built in the same year, the delicate lacery of its interior woodwork is more beautiful. This church was also furnished with an organ from the Searles organ factory.

When Searles acquired the public road that ran through his Windham estate, together with the public school on that road, he was obliged to build a new road and school nearby. The school that he subsequently built occupied one half of the building, the other half of which he directed be used as a chapel unrestricted to any denomination. As usual, the building's exterior was finished in stucco and brown trim, but, unlike the others, it and its setting have a different sort of charm reminiscent of a lonely mansion in a bleak rural province such as Normandy.

The North Salem Church (1911), in New Hampshire, is the fifth and second smallest church that Searles built. When the original

church burnt down in 1909 Searles offered to match, dollar for dollar, whatever the parishioners could raise provided that he could supervise the erection of the new building. In the end he had to do a good deal more than match each of the parishioners dollars.

In March of 1896 the members of the Methuen Town Meeting chose a committee of three persons to select the most appropriate site for a new high school building. At the next meeting, in 1897, the committee reported that they found the site immediately adjoining the old high school building to be the most suitable and advised that it be purchased, which was done. This land was directly across the street from the site where Searles was planning to erect his Washington monument, and it was obvious to him that if a high school building went up there it would be too close to allow the monument the space it needed. He wanted nothing to detract from the beauty of this monument. He finally erected the monument much farther away from the street than he originally planned. He immediately decided that the only way to solve the problem was to prevent the high school from being built on that site and he set the power of his wealth to work to achieve this end.

As soon as Searles learned what site the committee had chosen, and bought in 1897, he began to buy land some distance away on top of a slope opposite Tenney's castle, but sufficiently distant from the Washington monument site. The following excerpt from the March, 1898, Methuen Town Meeting ledger explains itself:

"Report of Committee on High School Building -

The Committee appointed and extended at the last town meeting to consider the subject of a new high school building beg leave to report progress and ask for more time.

"The progress which they are able to report is that our honored townsman, Mr. Searles, has authorized them to say that he is going to commence the erection of a high school building for the town of Methuen, upon his own property immediately."

At the Town Meeting in March 1900 the members attempted to partly repay Searles for his yet unfinished high school by voting -

"to furnish such police protection as Mr. Searles shall call for at any time and also place an extra officer on night duty."

On June 22, 1901, at Town Meeting, the town's obligation to him was even more clearly set forth:

"Hon. James O. Parker offered the following resolutions which were unanimously adopted by a rising vote and it was voted that a copy be engrossed and sent to Mr. Searles....

"Whereas our fellow citizen and townsman, Edward F. Searles, in his generosity has seen fit to make a donation of \$15,000. to the town of Methuen for the purpose of aiding in the construction of a system of sewers now in progress, therefore be it,

"Resolved, that the legal voters of Methuen Town Meeting assembled, accept this munificent gift in the

spirit in which it were made, as a free will offering for the benefit of all the citizens of the town.

"Resolved, that we are under obligations to the same generous and public-spirited citizen for numerous and expensive public improvements, all of which show his love for the town of Methuen.

"Resolved, that we extend to the donor, Mr. Edward F. Searles, in behalf of the town, a vote of thanks, which we are confident will express the sentiments of every citizen of the town."

About 1902, during the building of the high school, Searles employed the Irving & Casson decorating company of Boston to execute a quantity of wood carvings for his estate and the high school building. Mr. John Kirchmayer, the most noted woodcarver in Gothic style of his day, was in charge of the work and was assisted by Mr. H. C. Hughes. Mr. Kirchmayer came from Oberammergau, Germany, where he also studied sculpture. Mr. Hughes studied under Kirchmayer at the Irving & Casson woodworking shop in Cambridge. He is still a member of that firm and recalls occasions when Searles came to the shop to see how some work they were doing for him was progressing. Searles chose that firm to decorate his buildings because of his friendship with Mr. Casson, whom he met, presumably, when he himself was a decorator in Boston with Paul & Company.

Mr. Hughes recalls the many days which he spent at the high school building working on the capitals of the study-hall ceiling

and on the tympanums and Gothic style screen for the organ in the music room at Pine Lodge. Besides doing the work at Pine Lodge, Mr. Casson's men did all the interior decorating work in the five churches that Searles had built.

On May 6, 1904 he deeded the completed high school to the town. The most prominent feature of the ornate Tudor style building is a large oak-paneled study hall with a semi-circular bay window at one end. The high peaked ceiling is supported by heavy, carved oak ribs which meet the walls twenty feet from the floor. Light streaking through high windows at either end of the hall lends a cathedral effect. In fact, the hall was at first used as a chapel by the students. It is truly a beautiful building, equal to any found even at the largest universities. The arched passageways on the lower floors of the building reveal masonry as strong and enduring as that of any Tudor castle in England. Compared to Tenney's castle close by, the high school is by far the more beautiful and imposing structure. In fact the completion of the high school building automatically transferred first place in architectural beauty in town from the Tenney castle to the new building.

Regardless of the personal reasons that might have activated Searles into building the high school, and later a grammar school, and though his great wealth made it comparatively easy for him to do so, the members of the town meeting at once compared him to John Harvard. Although what one man wrote and what the whole town thought are two different things, the former is at least significant in revealing that one man believed wholeheartedly in the integrity

of practicing gratitude -

"November 9, 1905 - Special Town Meeting -

"Mr. Hartshorne, chairman of the school committee, offered the following resolutions which were unanimously adopted:

"Whereas, in the colonial days of 1636 by a 'vote of four hundred pounds to found a college', Massachusetts was the first commonwealth in history to appropriate public funds for educational purposes, which grant was two years later augmented by half the fortune of John Harvard, thus founding Harvard University, and

"Whereas, during the more than two and a half intervening centuries not only has that institution flourished and grown great, but public education itself has ever been regarded as the bulwark of the state, and high-minded, public-spirited, well-endowed citizens have ever and anon come forward with their wealth to develop and expand the opportunity demanded by the state, of each community for the education of its youth. So now our town of Methuen has in these latter days been greatly honored by a wealthy son, not only by the gift of a magnificent home for our high school, but by the love and care which the further possibilities of this building imply. If a thing of beauty be a joy forever, then great should be our joy and his, for not only is this building beautiful, but it is built to endure the ravages of time.

"Now therefore be it resolved by the citizens of Methuen in town meeting assembled that to Edward F. Searles, the donor, there is now, and ever shall be, due a debt of appreciation and gratitude not to be expressed in words, and that we commend to our children and our children's children, in the use of such riches as God and their own efforts may endow them with, a like spirit of disposal.

"Be it further provided that this resolution be spread upon the records of the town and that the school committee be, and is hereby instructed to prepare and present to Mr. Searles an appropriately engrossed copy thereof duly attested by the town clerk, selectmen, and school committee."

Mr. Hartshorne's resolutions mention the high school as if it were an outright gift. Actually Searles leased the building to the town for twenty-five years. The deed explains that he does not give the title to the land and buildings outright to the town because he wished to make further improvements upon it. At this time, in 1905, the interior was not completely finished.

At the same meeting, Mr. Hartshorne read another resolution tending gratitude to Searles for his gift of the Central Grammar School which was also finished at that time. It was also voted:

"by a unanimous vote, that the selectmen be authorized to transfer by deed to Mr. Edward F. Searles the real estate belonging to the town adjacent to the new Central Grammar School building, and that the

selectmen be authorized to sign said deed in behalf of the town."

That deed gave Searles the lot of land directly across the street from the site where his Washington monument stands. He immediately had it walled up and thus created the surrounding landscape much less distracting from the monument than it would have been if the town had built its new high school there.

On Saturday evenings, between 1900 and 1906, Searles often walked up to see his aunt Liddie Sterns whom he had persuaded to move to Methuen after her husband died several years previously. She lived at High Lodge, a beautiful Georgian mansion on the public road near Searles' Highfield property. What really brought Searles up to see his aunt was the Saturday night supper of fish cakes, baked beans and brown bread. He always joked that he couldn't get anything he liked to eat at Pine Lodge and often discussed how hard it was to get anything good to eat anywhere. He protested that the days of good old-fashioned cooking were gone forever. Whenever he went to High Lodge for his old-fashioned supper he always took his soda mints along with him. Once, when Searles was left without a cook, Mrs. Sterns sent her own cook to work for him. On the note which she gave her cook, to introduce her to Searles, she pasted the following printed poem:

"We may live without poetry, music, and art;
We may live without conscience and live without heart;
We may live without friends, we may live without books;
But civilized man cannot live without cooks."

Whenever Searles visited his aunt on Saturday night he usually dressed as he pleased, that is, not formal. He wore, as a rule, a shepard plaid coat of black and white check, dress trousers with an obscure stripe, a vest that didn't match either, and a bow tie. Sometimes he wore a vest that went with his coat, and a four-in-hand tie, but he usually wore the same clothes with a tie in some shade of red to match his favorite brown vest. He was habitually polishing his pince-nez glasses seemingly in an attempt to keep them as shiny as his immaculately polished tan shoes. A ring with a very large sapphire completed his attire.

He was careful about his appearance, never leaving the house without a clean shave, which partly accounted for his very ruddy complexion. He had blue eyes, a nose just a little too small, a prominent forehead and a rather full lower lip. His voice was low pitched. Although his cropped military-style moustache was turning grey, his hair, except for the mutton-chops in front of his ears, still had the reddish-gold tinge that was much more marked in former years. In short, he was a singularly handsome and well-preserved man of medium height and build with broad shoulders and well moulded facial features. He walked erect and very fast, looked young for his age, and never had a stoop.

From talks with him after supper on those frequent Saturday night visits, his aunt's niece's husband, Judge Cox, recalls that his chief topic of conversation was food and its current prices as compared with those during his youth. On the other hand Searles could be very interesting. When Judge Cox visited him at Pine Lodge one evening, he spent a good part of the time showing the Judge

through the mansion and pointing out different objects or paintings in his vast collection of art, with a detailed explanation of just where and how he had obtained each. It was amazing how he could remember the very incident when he had purchased each item in his collection. If one particular object reminded him of a rather interesting town in Europe, where he had bought it, nothing would do but for him to recount for the Judge how he happened to be traveling there and simply everything of interest that he could remember about the place.

It pleased him to reminisce, thus, of his European travels, and for that matter, to reminisce about anything. One evening in early summer as Judge Cox was leaving Pine Lodge, with Searles accompanying him to the gate, Searles pointed out each of the trees along the walk and on the grounds and told how he had them planted twenty-five years before. He then spoke of the pity that more people didn't plant trees. He cited the fact that most people think it takes a lifetime for a tree to grow, and yet here were the beautiful trees that he had planted only twenty-five years before!

Searles often told friends of his that his reason, or at least one of his reasons, for building churches was that they kept the boys in Sunday School on one of the two days of the week when they might otherwise be climbing over his walls. It is not certain whether this is truth or legend but it is certain that his chief reason for complying with someone's request to build a church, home for the aged, boy's club, or anything for that matter,

was that it gave him a chance to supervise the building and decorating work. The truth of this is augmented by the fact that he never gave money outright for something to be built. He always made the provision that he be allowed to supervise the work himself.

During 1908-1909 he deeded the railroad station, he began to build in 1905, to the Boston & Maine Railroad, built the Berkely Street home for the aged in Lawrence, and paid off a \$66,000. debt due from the town of Methuen. In 1911 he added a chapel to the Berkely Street home for the aged in memory of his aunt Liddie Sterns. In 1913 he built, for the town of Methuen, a concrete bridge over the Spicket River adjacent to his organ factory on Broadway. And at the same town meeting that the gift of the bridge was announced, it was also voted:

"to close East Street from the junction of Lawrence Street and Washington Place - to the junction of the new street built by Edward F. Searles."

"Voted: to accept the new street running from Lawrence Street to East Street as laid out by the selectmen."

He had finally achieved what he had always wanted - he bought, or rather swapped, for the public street that ran in front of his mansion, another street that he had built skirting his estate. He walled up the old street and never again had to use the quaint stucco and brown trim overpass which he had formerly used to get to his stables behind the wall on the other side of East Street, without once walking on public ground.

After his uncle, Artemas Sterns, the Lawrence department store magnate, died he moved his aunt out of the smoky mill city to Methuen where he was sure she would be more comfortable. He detested the factories in that city and did all in his power to eradicate the mills in his own town, Methuen. His organ factory in Methuen hardly looked like a factory, and made no noise. He had replaced the woolen mill, which had formerly occupied the building, with something far more respectable. It was evident that Searles had a vague plan to keep Methuen a rural town. Towards this end he attempted to buy up all the river front property in town in order to prevent manufacturers from building any more factories than were already standing. He not only attempted to buy but actually did finally buy all the river front property from the already established mill in the center of Methuen to the Arlington Mills on the border of Lawrence; all this with the exception of a large stretch on the left bank on which his good friend, Mrs. Henry Nevins, had erected a home for the aged in memory of her late husband. Thus, all the river front property that could have possibly been used by manufacturers was either owned by Searles or otherwise unavailable for a factory site. Out of one such parcel of river front land across the street from his mansion on Lawrence Street he created a small pond with graceful white swans, small dock, and boats. A house on another parcel became the rectory for a church he had built nearby. Thus, the land that manufacturers might some day have bought was diverted to other ends. It is rather ironical that Searles successfully used money that machine industry, in the form of railroads, had

made to stop progress of machine industry in Methuen.

There is another bit of irony attached to Searles' last purchase of river front property in 1903. It will be remembered that the Tenney brothers were doing a fine business in shoe and hat manufacturing in Methuen about 1860 when Searles, despairing of all factories, went to Boston to seek better employment. In 1903 Searles bought from J. M. Tenney, one of the four brothers, the same land and factory which had made them wealthy enough to be greatly envied by the young Searles. The site was never occupied by a factory again until after Searles' death.

At the turn of the century the second largest building in the main square of the town of Methuen was a rather shabby looking three-story wooden structure called The Exchange Hotel. It held the most prominent position on the square and was, particularly to Searles, an eyesore. In 1897, when it came up for sale, Searles welcomed the chance to buy it and have it converted into something more to his liking. He had no particular use for the building but simply bought it and the adjoining livery stables for the same reason he had bought many other buildings in town - to make them look as he would have them look. In short order his architect and builders converted the simple wooden building into a charming stucco and white trim town house with two halls and towers and unusual architectural features such as French windows and a colonnaded porch. It remained empty until a group from the Young Men's Christian Association suggested that he might outfit the building for them. This he did, but when interest seemed to fall

off he decided to close the building and let it remain empty until a new use could be found. Thus it remained until 1915 when his friend John Ingraham, a Mason, told his fellow Masons, at a meeting, that he had been authorized by Searles to present to the Masonic Lodge the property and building then known as "the Y.M.C.A.", without any conditions attached, for Masonic purposes. It was to be given in memory of Searles' father, Jessie Gould Searles, who was a Mason.

John Ingraham began working for Searles about 1892 and in 1906 was given full charge of all affairs of the Methuen Organ Company. In 1910, the Masonic Temple of Methuen, of which Ingraham was a member, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Through Ingraham's influence, the out-of-town visiting Masons were entertained at the Serlo Organ Hall, and elsewhere about the Searles estate. In October of 1916, when the Masonic Temple was formally dedicated, Searles assisted in the reception of the guests in the afternoon, and became the honored guest of the Grand Master in the evening.

The livery stables, adjacent to the old hotel, were removed and replaced by a picturesque building by the moving of several old houses to the site and remodeling them into a new structure. When it was finished, in 1900, it was a three and a half story stucco and brown trim affair with the upper portions done in red shingles. Its deep eaves and small balconies make the building seem much larger than it actually is. The interior woodwork, as with many of Searles' buildings, is beautifully worked cypress paneling. Beamed ceilings and a sturdy, wide, staircase lend strength and warmth of color simultaneously. The main feature of the building

was a paneled coffee room and tap room; each with an enormous carved-stone fireplace and heavy beams in the high ceilings.

Searles erected this building, perhaps, because he felt obliged to replace the hotel, which he had remodeled, by another one - smaller, yet more elaborate. Even so, it was quite adequate for the small number of travelers who stopped in Methuen. He called it, romantically enough, The Red Tavern.

Searles was truly a fortunate man in acquiring great wealth, but being so wealthy he often found himself excluded from the circle of the average man of the town. While he was watching his carpenters remodeling the building he had bought directly across the street from the Masonic Temple, in the main square of the town, a man came in to get some of the workmen to sign his nomination papers for his election to a town office. He went to almost every man in the building but did not approach Searles for fear that Searles would think that he was asking for free support. Whatever the cause was, Searles was deeply hurt and remarked, so, to Charlie Dudley, his chauffeur.

Incidentally, when this building was finished with the usual stucco and, this time, cream-color trim and row of columns across the front, it too remained vacant for several years until a use could be found for it. In 1909, when the town officials had to evict, for need of space, the First National Bank from the rooms in the town hall which they had been renting, they arranged with Searles to lease his newly remodeled building and have been there ever since. John A. Perkins, a Methuen banker, was one of Searles'

best friends and often came to Pine Lodge to visit. He always brought his jew's-harp and stayed all evening. Then they went into the dining room where a box was kept well supplied with cookies and pie. They had their pie and then Mr. Perkins went home.

The fourth and last building which Searles remodeled in the town's main square was supposed to be a grocery store in which he was setting up a friend in business. When it was finished, with its six wooden Greek Revival columns in front, it was probably the most unique grocery store in New England. The changes made on this building, together with those made on the three other prominent buildings in the very center of town, made the power of Searles' wealth felt above and beyond the changes he had made already - namely, his miles of wall, rambling mansion, and monopoly of the lands that had once comprised about a dozen farms. He was making the town to order, and to his own order at that. Few yet realized the great influence which he extended upon the town.

Edwin Castle who ran the drugstore, and later the grocery across the street from the Masonic Temple, was also Searles' business manager on the town newspaper - Searles' Methuen Transcript. He was Searles' mouthpiece at town meetings and often acted as real estate agent for him.

Mark Hopkins would have been amazed to know that the millions he had amassed building railroads was to be the power factor in the physical transformation of a little New England town. Each

passenger who paid his fare as he boarded one of Mark Hopkins' trains in California was actually giving his bit so that Methuen might one day look like an English village. Besides remodeling many buildings he had other, unsightly, buildings demolished in order to beautify the surroundings. All these small real estate purchases added together comprised a large fraction of the town's land owned by one man. Even as early as 1891 Searles was by far the heaviest taxpayer in town, excepting, of course, the mills.

Chapter Seven

" APPLESIDE "

Chapter Seven

" APPLESIDE "

The townspeople, by 1918, were beginning to think of Searles as an aged eccentric hiding in an ancient fortress. A generation had grown old and another had come into maturity since he first began to alter the architecture of his parents' little farmhouse. And the new generation, knowing nothing whatever about the man's life and the origin of his wealth and mansions, accepted him as part of a mystical legend and gave ready ear to the ridiculous and jealous adornments to the legend concocted by the older inhabitants of the town. Some of these older people had even gone to school with Searles and they were obviously jealous of his wealth and the prestige that it had enabled him to acquire. However, there can be no doubt that they were partly justified in calling him eccentric, if that means he was different; did things differently, and lived on a different looking estate. It was perfectly natural - with his wealth he could afford to have everything different. Fellow townsmen were jealous and the farmers, especially, ridiculed him. His once simple farm was, after all, a strange sight for a farming town - with its swans and ponds, marble lions and acres of lawns, a Greek Revival windmill framed between Doric columns in the hayfield, statues atop the halls, bridges and ten-foot walls.

His rambling, seventy-four room mansion with its fantasy of

gables, porticoes, and wings, still stood behind the high street wall but he hardly ever entered it now, preferring to live in the more modern wing, farthest away from the street, which he built at the turn of the century. It was farther up on the hill than the rest of the mansion and, probably, because it was closer to the apple orchard, he called it Appleside. The dust in the dozens of rooms in the three stories of old Pine Lodge slowly settled down upon the antique furniture and bric-a-brac just as age was slowly settling down upon Searles himself. He realized that it was no longer a perfect work of art, but, because he had spent so much thought and time on it he was reluctant to tear down the curiosity full of curiosities. It was a diversion which first preoccupied and, now, wearied him. Age alone was probably the chief reason why he wearied of many things.

With age came loneliness and even the frequent change of surroundings he effected by going to New York periodically became of little use to enliven his spirits. In 1914, when he was seventy-three, he was in the habit of busying himself as best he could around Methuen for several months by visiting his different property holdings, and then he would go to New York for a week or two. He had an office at 71 Broadway, in the firm of Thomas Hubbard who managed the Searles millions. After a few hours at the office he would go to his hotel, the Biltmore, and begin to wonder what was going on in Methuen right about that time. It was obvious, even to the elevator operator at the Biltmore, that Searles was a very lonely man. His name was Angelo M. Ellison, and he remembers to this day that the white-moustached old gentleman never tipped as

did some of his other passengers. The lad, Angy as he was called, was somewhat lonely himself. He had just recently arrived from Greece and although it was easy to adopt a name more easy to pronounce than his real one, it was not so easy to master the English language. This difficulty, together with the necessity of earning a living, made it very hard for him to associate with boys his own age.

Usually Searles greeted the elevator boy with a polite "good morning" or "good evening" each time he entered the elevator. Gradually, however, he began to take a kindly interest in the seventeen year-old boy's home country, his parents, and his difficulties in mastering a new language. Shortly, in Angy's own words, "He started to tell me a few things about himself ", and asked Angy if he would like to work as his personal companion. Naturally, tired of traveling up and down the Biltmore Hotel all day, every day, Angy accepted the new job at once. In the months that followed, each time Searles came to New York, he and Angy would go for long walks along Fifth Avenue and occasionally go to the Metropolitan Opera House. When Searles went on inspection trips of his holdings, such as the Pittsburgh & Shawmut Railroad coal pits, he was always accompanied by Angy. In Philadelphia they stopped to visit Searles' aunts, the Smith sisters. And back in New York on Sundays they usually went to the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, the organ of which Searles was quite fond. By this time Searles' legal address was at The Murray Hill Hotel - rooms 646 and 647; his legal residence as a citizen of the State of New York. He had made New York his legal address to protest the

heavy taxes imposed upon him in Massachusetts.

In 1915 Searles took Angy to Methuen to accompany him on his long rides there and in New Hampshire. While Stanton-Harcourt was acquiring the finishing touches to its interior decoration Angy lived at Morrison Lodge nearby and Searles lived in Methuen.

There follows two letters from Searles to Angy written during the next summer:

"Pine Lodge

Methuen, Mass. July 22, 1916

My Dear Ellison,

Your little note received; glad to hear from you and that you were well this very hot weather. I have not been able to find a cook for the castle, although I have answered several advertisements. I was in Boston yesterday trying to find someone but did not succeed. I think I shall be obliged to try for a Japanese.

I hope we shall be able to find someone soon as I am anxious to have you back again.

Yours truly,

E.F.S. "

"Pine Lodge

Methuen, Mass. July 24, 1916

As soon as I hear from the cook, at what time he will arrive, I will send you word so you can come on at once, which I hope will be the last of this week.

I got your clothes from the tailor and have taken them to Windham.

Hoping we shall soon be able to get settled at the castle, I remain,

Very truly yours,

E.F.S.

"

They did finally get settled at the castle and Angy spent various weeks there throughout the summer, besides living there all through that winter. Try to imagine what living in a castle must have felt like to a poor boy who had had to operate an elevator all day for a living. He lived there also during part of the summer of 1917, up to the time when he enlisted in the Army. Even then, Searles used his influence to have him transferred to a station in Jersey City, New Jersey, so that Angy could live almost as well as a civilian, going to and from The Murray Hill Hotel in New York City whenever he choose. Even so, Searles saw less of him than before, and his letters became noticeably more personal:

"Pine Lodge

Methuen, Mass. Sept. 29, 1917

My dear Ange,

Just a line to let you know that I received your

two letters this morning and hasten to tell you how glad I was to hear from you.

If you go to New York today I am sorry that I cannot be there. I was obliged to come to Methuen to attend to many things, but I will be in New York next Saturday and Sunday.

If you can get away I will be waiting for you at the Murray Hill.

I hope you will soon get your uniform as I am afraid you will be cold in your thin clothes.

If you get hungry buy something outside, if you can get it, and don't mind spending the money for you can have some more.

If you don't come to New York next Saturday I shall go out to Allentown to see you on Monday or Tuesday following.

Do the best you can to take care of yourself and be a good soldier and believe me, as ever,

Faithfully yours,

Dad "

Besides signing off as "Dad", the letters which followed reveal how close the youth was to Searles' heart.

"Pine Lodge Methuen, Mass. Oct. 4, 1917

My dear Soldier Boy,

If your new uniform is not warm enough you must get

some new underclothing. Don't spare the money to make yourself comfortable. I don't think I will be able to go to New York again until after the fifteenth of this month; if I do I will telegraph you.

Hope you are well and take good care of yourself, and believe me as ever the same.

E.F.S. "

"Pine Lodge

Methuen, Mass. Oct. 7, 1917

My dear Soldier Boy,

Oh how sorry I am that I was not at the Hotel to welcome you. I was obliged to come home, to be on time for payday the first of the month.

I went up to the Castle today and closed it up. I think of you every day and night and wonder if you are warm and comfortable. I miss you very much, my life is only half a life without my dear boy.

God Bless and keep you from harm is my prayer.

With much love from your old guardian,

E.F.S. "

P.S. - This is all the paper I can get tonight; the Pine Lodge paper is in Miss Littlefield's desk and she has gone to bed.

11:45 P.M. Good Night "

Miss Edith Littlefield was Searles' cousin. She and her mother had been living in one of the caretaker's houses nearby. After Miss Littlefield's mother died Searles brought his cousin up to the big house, Pine Lodge, to live and act as his personal secretary. They habitually opened and answered the mail together every morning. It is obvious, from the card accompanying a gift that she gave him, that they were warmly attached to one another. The card, which Searles saved by placing it in one of the books in his library, addresses him intimately as "Ned", his boyhood nickname.

"Murray Hill Hotel
Park Ave. & 40th to 41st Sts.
One Block from Grand Central Station

Oct. 10, 1917

My dear Boy,

I leave tonight at 12 M. I could not get ready for the five o'clock train.

I went to the Studio to see your pictures and I took three of them. They are fine. I had one taken of myself for you. Will send one to you next week if I get them.

I now must get ready and pack my bags. I miss you my Boy.

Goodnight

Dad "

Here there is a break in the letters and it seems evident that it was about this time that Searles substituted Arthur Walker, for

Miss Littlefield, to act as his private secretary. Walker was a clerk in the offices of Stillman & Hubbard, the law firm that represented the Searles railroad interests on Wall Street. At Searles' invitation, Walker spent a week in Methuen in November, 1911, to rest after an illness he had in New York. Later, when William Shillaber, Sr. died, and left a vacancy on the Searles-owned New York Globe, Searles chose Walker to take his place. After Walker became Searles' private secretary he handled much of his business correspondence, and later claimed that Searles even dictated some of his letters to Ange to him. And possibly he did dictate a few, for the mid-summer letters of 1918 are not so personal as the others:

"Pine Lodge

My dear Ange,

Methuen, Mass. June 3, 1918

Yours of the 29th received and I was very happy to hear from you, and wish you could be here sitting under the pine trees. I think you would like the odor of the pines better than the smell of gasoline and oil, but we cannot do anything now-a-days that we want to do.

I have been up to Windham two or three times, but the Castle looks lonesome without you and Sammy rolling on the grass. Sammy has grown to be a fine big dog.

Yours as ever, the same old, loving

Dad "

"Pine Lodge

Methuen, Mass. July 5, 1918

My dear lonesome boy Ange,

I was very glad to hear from you; it seems as though I have been away a month, although it is only a week.

Yesterday I celebrated the Fourth by going up to Windham with Miss Littlefield and paid a visit to Morrison Lodge and the Castle on the hill.

We got caught in a thunder shower so we had to wait in Morrison Lodge until the rain was over. Seavey and the men were at work in the hay field until the rain came on; then they had to give it up.

Take good care of yourself and sleep well at the Murray Hill and forget that you are lonesome.

Faithfully yours,

Your loving old Dad is lonesome without you,

Dad "

A week or so later, at the Murray Hill Hotel, Searles awoke during the night with a pain in his abdomen. He roused Angy who called a doctor. The doctor revealed that Searles had prost ate gland trouble and gave him a sedative. Angy was discharged from the Army early in the following month of August, 1919, and since the doctor had been prescribing a change of scenery for Searles, for quite some time, they traveled to the Canadian Rockies stopping at Lake Louise then on to the Pacific Coast. They returned to

New York in September.

By this time Angy was twenty-three years old and had matured since Searles first met him. He decided to return to his homeland to straighten out family affairs over there. Accordingly, on November 5, 1919, Searles sent him off to Smyrna, Asia Minor. Before the ship sailed Angy wrote the following letter:

"On board S.S. Canada

November 5, 1919

My dear loving Daddy,

In an hour or so the boat is sailing and by tomorrow I will be far away on the sea. But no matter in what part of the globe I am found I will always love you and remember you. You have been too good to me, more than I ever deserved, but dear Daddy be sure that your boy always loved you and will love you with all his heart. I can not give you anything or repay you with anything but my love which is pure and which is true for you.

God bless you and give you health and happiness forever.

I wish that I had not gone away from you but I am sure that my homecoming to you will be speedier than you think.

Take good care of yourself. Wishing you happiness and hoping to see you soon,

Your Boy

Angy "

"Pine Lodge

Methuen, Mass. Jan. 20, 1920

My dear Ange,

Your letter of December 11th was received yesterday and I was very glad to know of your safe arrival at your old home, and that you were making some progress at getting your family affairs into better shape. I hope you will be able to make such arrangements for them that you will feel that you can leave them to take care of themselves without much anxiety on your part.

I am looking forward anxiously, for the time when you will return, and the old Murray Hill apartment is very lonesome without you.

Hoping this letter will find you well and happy, I am, as ever,

Faithfully yours,
Your Loving Daddy,
E.F.S. "

In the next month of February Searles, as usual, went to New York to live at the Murray Hill Hotel for a while. Towards the end of the month he began to suffer from the prostatic gland trouble and on March 2, 1920, it was necessary for him to go to a hospital in New York. Since Ange was still in Greece, and Searles was all alone in the New York hospital, he sent for Walter Glidden, a young caretaker at the Pine Lodge estate. After Searles went

under an operation by Doctor McCarthy, a New York urologist, Angy returned from his trip on April 3rd to find his friend convalescing at the Murray Hill Hotel. It was his first knowledge that Searles had been ill. Walter Glidden continued to care for Searles while Angy began his studies at a New York preparatory school. Searles continued his hospital treatments until April 20th. In May he and Glidden returned to Methuen and later, that same month, Angy received the following letter:

"Pine Lodge

Methuen, Mass. May 17, 1920

My dear Ange,

Your letter was received yesterday, and you are not forgotten. The reason I have not written to you is that I have been very sick, and am still in bed under the doctor's care.

I am glad to hear you are employing your time so well in your studies.

With love from Dad "

"Pine Lodge

Methuen, Mass. June 18, 1920

My dear Ange,

I am still in bed under the doctor's care but think that I am gaining slowly. As soon as I am able, I will let you know when I can see you.

Mr. Walker says that the Troy Polytechnical School for Electrical Engineering is the best place

for you, and you approve of it, and I advise you to take the preparatory course in New York this summer, and Mr. Walker will make all the arrangements for you.

Hoping you are well and happy and will keep so, I am as ever,

Faithfully yours,

from Dad

P.S. - Let me hear from you as often as you can. "

That was the last letter that Angy ever received from Searles and although he didn't realize it, he would never see him again. Arthur Walker, Searles' trusted business secretary, arranged for Angy to go on vacation during that summer's school recess. Was Walker aware that if he could make it appear to Searles that Angy was neglecting him in his illness, the old gentleman would be sufficiently hurt as to be willing to think of the youth as merely a fickle boy, rather than the close companion that he actually was? The result was, perhaps, that Searles, resigned to loneliness, ill, and without Angy's company, signed the will of July 24th, 1920, leaving the bulk of his fortune to Walker. Never-the-less, it is certain that Searles proved, by his kind affection for this young man, to be something more than a stuffy old Victorian full of hypocrisy and prejudices. He was human after all. His hard, high stone walls then were not symbolic of his true emotional character.

As his strength slowly left him, Searles rarely left his bed, and when he did, he was carried downstairs by the human-chair method, only to sit in a wheelchair. Thus, he spent his last six weeks. Doctor Henry F. Dearborn, of Lawrence, who attended him during this time, recalls that his disposition was normal for one as ill as he was. One day he would be friendly; another day quiet. On the days that he was talkative he spoke about his trips to England and of English food. He was, in the doctor's own words, "easy to handle." During this period he often complained of weakness but felt no pain. He was unconscious from early morning until 5:10 in the afternoon of August 6th, 1920, when he died.

Services were conducted in the Baronial Hall at Appleside with the body in a closed casket. Mr. Truette, his favorite organist from Boston, played a prelude to open the service and a postlude to close it. Following the service the casket was removed to a crypt in the beautiful red sandstone chapel nearby, which Searles had constructed on his estate in 1917. The mourners followed the casket to the chapel where brief committal services were held. Among those present at the funeral were Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Sr., Charles Tenney's son, Daniel, and Angy. The legend was at last a legend.

Now, the millions have long since gone elsewhere. Like Searles, they too are part of a legend as far as his village of Methuen is concerned. His was an incredible fortune and it left

an incredible legend. Although the walls in Methuen and in New Hampshire are crumbling in places, for the most part, they, like the legend, still stand with their castles and mansions, gardens, and deep, quiet, pools. The weeds and brush are closing in but they haven't yet obliterated the Searlesian charm.

R. Fremmer - 1948





